Frequently Asked Questions about Applying for Grants

Q: What is a grant?
A: A grant is an award of funding or resources that has a formal application process. A grant provides support for a project in a classroom, at a school, or for the District.

There are two types of grants: categorical (e.g., Title I, IDEA, Perkins) and competitive (e.g., GEAR UP, Fresh Fruit & Vegetable, Target Field Trip). Categorical grants are awarded based on a formula. Competitive grants are awarded based on the strength of the grant application.

There are four categories of grant funders: federal (e.g., US Department of Education); state (e.g., SC Department of Education); corporate (e.g., Lowe’s); and foundation (e.g., Coastal Community Foundation).

Q: What is the difference between a grant and a donation?
A: In general, grants have an application process, whereas donations do not. Grants usually have requirements such as start and end dates, reporting, and restrictions on how to spend the funds.

Q: What is my first step in applying for a grant?
A: The first step in applying for a grant is to review the CCSD Grant Writing Procedures. You can find them at:

- CCSD internet (on the home page, type “grants” in the search box)
- CCSD intranet (GRANTS CENTRAL page)
- CCSD grants officer (grants@charleston.k12.sc.us, 843.937.6441)

Q: What kind of support does the CCSD grants officer provide?
A: The grants officer provides technical support to build capacity among CCSD’s 6,000 staff to write grants. The grants officer provides guidance on the CCSD grant writing process, how to find grants, strategies for writing winning grants, grant application review & editing, finding supporting documents, and grant partnerships with outside agencies and organizations.
Q: Does the CCSD grants officer approve all grants?
A: The grants officer does not approve grants. The grants officer helps to facilitate the grant approval process. Before applying for a grant or providing a letter of support, data, information or collaboration on someone else’s grant, you should contact the CCSD grants officer as early as possible.

Q: Why do I have to notify the District before I apply for a grant?
A: The school board (Policy DD) requires the superintendent to report all grants that any CCSD school/department receives. Contact CCSD’s grants officer before applying for a grant, to ensure that it is logged in the CCSD Grants Tracking Database.

Q: I want to apply for a grant. Does it have to go through the District?
A: Yes. Schools and departments are sub-entities of just one organization (CCSD) with only one authorized representative (superintendent) and one tax ID number. When you apply for a grant, it is on behalf of the superintendent and CCSD. Contact CCSD’s grants officer before applying for a grant.

Q: A college, non-profit organization or public agency is applying for a grant that will involve CCSD students, teachers, or staff. Do I have to notify the CCSD grants officer?
A: Yes. When a college, non-profit, or public agency is applying for a grant, an Intent to Apply for a Grant must be routed to CCSD leadership. Before providing a letter of support, data, information, or collaboration on a grant application, you should contact the CCSD grants officer.

Q: I am applying for a grant using our school’s PTA, Booster Club, school foundation, or other organization. Do I have to notify the CCSD grants officer?
A: Yes. Before applying for a grant that will benefit CCSD students, teachers, or staff, you should contact the CCSD grants officer as early as possible.

Q: I am not a CCSD employee (e.g., volunteer, parent, vendor) and I am applying for a grant that will benefit students, teachers or staff. Do I have to notify the CCSD grants officer?
A: Yes. Before applying for a grant that will benefit CCSD students, teachers, or staff, you should contact the CCSD grants officer as early as possible.
Q: I work at a college, non-profit organization or public agency and I am applying for a grant that will benefit students, teachers or staff. Do I have to notify the CCSD grants officer?
A: Yes. Before applying for a grant that will benefit CCSD students, teachers, or staff, you should contact the CCSD grants officer as early as possible.

Q: How do I find grants & how can I learn how to write grants?
A: Each school and central office department has one representative designated as the grants liaison. The CCSD grants officer e-mails each grants liaison periodic grant alerts to share. Any employee can also visit CCSD Grants Central (intranet) or call/e-mail the grants officer for assistance.

Q: How many grants does CCSD apply for each year?
A: CCSD applies for approximately 1,000 grants each year.

Q: Who writes all of the grants for CCSD?
A: There are over 700 grant writers in CCSD schools and departments who have been successful at getting grants.

Q: How much money does CCSD get from grants?
A: Approximately $25 million in special revenue is generated each year from competitive grants.

Q: What should I do if I get a grant?
A: Contact CCSD’s grants officer to update the CCSD Grants Tracking Database. Share all of your grant information with your school’s bookkeeper or your department’s budget technician. Your bookkeeper/budget technician will assist you in managing grant funds and making purchases.
Grant Writing Guidelines

Grants less than $100,000 (grant writer is CCSD employee, volunteer, parent, vendor):

- Before beginning work on a grant application, the grant writer completes an *Intent to Apply for a Grant* and sends it to the CCSD grants officer.
- The grants officer provides assistance to the grant writer.
- Five days before the grant is due, the grant writer sends the grant application to the grants officer for final review.
- Three days before the grant is due, the grant writer obtains any grant application signatures (e.g., principal’s signature, superintendent’s signature, finance official’s signatures).
- The grants officer adds the grant to the CCSD Grants Tracking Database.
- When the grant writer receives notification of a grant award, they notify the grants officer.
- The grants officer updates the CCSD Grants Tracking Database & recognizes the grant writer.

Grants $100,000 and above (grant writer is CCSD employee, volunteer, parent, vendor):

- Before beginning work on a grant application, the grant writer completes an *Intent to Apply for a Grant* and sends it to the CCSD grants officer.
- The grants officer quickly circulates the *Intent to Apply for a Grant* to district leaders for review.
- The grants officer provides assistance to the grant writer.
- Five days before the grant is due, the grant writer sends the grant application to the grants officer for final review.
- Three days before the grant is due: the grant writer obtains any grant application signatures (e.g., principal’s signature, superintendent’s signature, finance official’s signatures).
- The grants officer adds the grant to the CCSD Grants Tracking Database.
- When the grant writer receives notification of a grant award, he or she notifies the grants officer.
- The grants officer updates the CCSD Grants Tracking Database & recognizes the grant writer.
External grants (grant writer is at a college, non-profit, public agency):

- A CCSD partner who is thinking about applying for a grant that will benefit CCSD students, teachers or staff completes an *Intent to Apply for a Grant* and sends it to the District’s grants officer.
- The District’s grants officer circulates the *Intent to Apply for a Grant* to district leaders for review.
- The grants officer provides assistance to the grant writer.
- Three days before the grant is due, the grant writer sends the grant application to the District’s grants officer for final review.
- The District’s grants officer updates the CCSD Grants Tracking Database.
- When the grant writer receives notification of a grant award, he or she notifies the District’s grants officer.
- The District’s grants officer updates the CCSD Grants Tracking Database & recognizes our partner.

---

You can find the *Intent to Apply for a Grant* at:

- CCSD internet (on the home page, type “grants” in the search box)
  - CCSD intranet (GRANTS CENTRAL page)
  - CCSD grants officer (grants@charleston.k12.sc.us, 843.937.6441)
Charleston County School District (CCSD) offices and schools consistently look to community and national partners for innovative public-private partnerships. Each school year, CCSD offices and schools are awarded millions of dollars in highly competitive grants. These grants are from foundations, corporations, and state & federal agencies. Grant awards range from hundreds of dollars to millions of dollars. Grant resources allow schools to expand the academic and personal development opportunities available to students. A few examples of these grants include:

- **Charleston County Environmental Management, Project Impact** grants for education about local environmental hazards
- **Coastal Community Foundation, Cooper River Bridge Run Fund** grants for school wellness activities for students and staff
- **Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, Public Selective High School** grant to increase access and success for low-income students
- **Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries** grants for school library books
- **Lowe's Toolbox for Education** grants for school grounds and building improvements
- **Special Olympics South Carolina, Unified Champion School** for sports inclusion for students with disabilities
- **South Carolina Arts Commission, Teacher Standards Implementation** grants for art supplies and artist-residencies
- **South Carolina Department of Education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers** grants for extended learning
- **South Carolina Department of Education, Fresh Fruits & Vegetables** grants for healthy snacks
- **Target Field Trip** grants for class visits to local cultural attractions
- **U.S. Department of Education, GEAR UP** grant to prepare a cohort of middle & high school students for college
Alicia Kokkinis, Grants Officer
grants@charleston.k12.sc.us
843.937.6441