B.3.2 Contracted Services

The Arizona Autism Charter School (AZACS) will use contractors in the areas of special education services, financial services and legal services. The AZACS Board and executive team will oversee these services and ensure all contractors are following rules and regulations as set forth by the Arizona Department of Education and the AZACS Board of Directors.

Special Education Contracted Services

The target population for AZACS are students on the autism spectrum, therefore, it is expected that most students entering the school will be affected by autism. As mentioned in the Target Population Section, this is assumption is based on the enrollment patterns and tendencies at other charter schools around the country focused on serving children with autism.

Most special education service needs at AZACS will be provided by staff. The Curriculum and ABA Supervisor will be a doctoral level school psychologist with extensive experience conducting evaluations and services in school settings for students with a variety of special needs. All teachers will be certified in special education and will be equipped and trained to teach children with autism as well as other special needs.

The special education areas not covered by full-time staff will be Speech and Occupational Therapy. Because deficiencies in communication skills are core symptoms of autism, it is safe to assume that most students will require Speech Therapy services. Most students with autism also have deficiencies in self-help skills which are typically addressed by Occupational Therapy. Although AZACS plans to eventually have full-time therapists on staff to provide Speech and Occupational Therapy services, it is more cost-effective to hire contractors during the first few years of operations. These providers will ensure students are receiving speech and occupational therapy as outlined in students Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

AZACS has budgeted the following for contracted Speech and Occupational Services:

- Year 1, $95,000
- Year 2, $97,850
- Year 3, $100,786

The dollar amounts above are based on a quote from Integrated Education Services (IES). AZACS researched a several providers of special education services and plans to use Integrated Education Services as this company comes highly recommended by leaders in the charter school community who are currently using this company to provide excellent services to special education students.

Professional Qualifications for Speech Therapist:

- Certified by the state of Arizona in Speech Pathology
- A track record of success in working with students with autism
- Ability to work cooperatively delivering speech therapy services in a school setting

Professional Qualifications for Occupational Therapist:

- Certified by the state of Arizona in Occupational Therapy
- A track record of success in working with students with autism
- Ability to work cooperatively delivering speech therapy services in a school setting

Financial Services

AZACS plans to hire Diamond Financial Solutions to provide full service accounting services including payroll. In addition Diamond Financial will provide services for SAIS reporting and reconciliation as well as entitlement grants writing and management. Diamond Financial Solutions comes highly recommended by the Arizona Charter Schools Association and has many years of experience in the financial management of charter schools. AZACS believes that these services will be handled in a more cost-effective manner by hiring an experienced company such as Diamond Financial Solutions. AZACS has obtained a quote totaling $33,000 for financial services from Diamond Financial Solutions. The breakdown is the following:

- Full service accounting (including payroll) $25,000
- SAIS reporting/reconciliation $5,000
- Grant writing/management (Entitlements) $3,000

Professional Qualifications:

- At least five years of experience in successfully providing cost-effective financial services to charter schools.
- Founder, Michelle Diamond, was the Director of Finance for the Arizona Charter School Board for five years, giving her first-hand knowledge in compliance and accountability requirements.
- Ability and willingness to council AZACS Board of Directors during school's start-up phase at no cost.

Legal Services

AZACS has been working with attorney Leo Condos of the Condos Law Office for establishing itself as a corporation and attaining non-profit status. Mr. Condos has over 15 years of experience working in all legal matters related to charter schools and comes highly recommended by members of the AZACS board as well as leaders in the charter school community. Condos Law Office has been generously donating its services during the planning and start-up of the school. AZACS has budgeted about $7,000 per year, for a total of $21,000, in legal fees during the first three years of operation. This is included in budget line item titled AIS. Attorney Leo Condos estimates this dollar amount should cover any legal expenses during the first three years of operation.

Professional Qualifications:

- Licensed to practice law in the state of Arizona
- Over 15 years of experience in charter school law and non-profit law
- Ability and willingness council AZACS Board of Directors during start-up phase at no cost.