



# Guide to the Charter Renewal Process

**Arizona State Board for Charter Schools**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document provides guidance for charter holders that are eligible to submit a Renewal Application to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (“Board”), pursuant to A.R.S. §15-183(I). The purpose of this document is to provide guidance about when and how to submit a Renewal Application.

To ensure that the Board continues its oversight of quality school choices, certain criteria are reviewed during the charter renewal process, in accordance with the frameworks adopted by the Board.

If the charter holder chooses not to apply for renewal, then the charter expires at the end of the contracted term.

## **II. OVERVIEW OF THE CHARTER RENEWAL PROCESS**

Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-183(I), a new charter is effective for 15 years. At least 18 months before the charter’s expiration, Board staff will notify the charter holder that the charter holder may apply for renewal and must make available the charter holder’s Renewal Application. The Board customizes each Renewal Application based upon a charter holder’s performance history. ([See Performance Frameworks](#))

### ***Charter Renewal Stages***

The major stages of the charter renewal process are summarized below:

Renewal Notification	The charter holder receives a renewal notification 18 months prior to the expiration of the charter. Prior to sending the renewal notification, Board staff conducts a compliance check per Board policy.
Application Submission	The charter holder must submit its Renewal Application via the ASBCS Online system on or before the deadline date ( <i>15 months before the expiration of the charter</i> ) provided in the renewal notification. The Renewal Application must be complete upon submission and adhere to the requirements set forth in this guidance.
Application Review	Upon submission of the Renewal Application, staff will evaluate the pertinent documents.
Site Visit	An Academic Systems Review (“ASR”) site visit is conducted prior to the Board’s consideration of the Renewal Application.
Board Consideration	A notification is sent to the charter holder providing the scheduled meeting date for the Board’s consideration of the Renewal Application. All materials contained in the application and the report from the ASR are included in the Board’s materials, along with the staff report. The Board will make a decision about whether or not to grant the charter renewal contract.
Renewal Decision	If the Board renews the charter, the renewal charter contract is for a term of 20 years.  The Board may deny the request for renewal if, in its judgment, the charter holder has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the Board’s Academic Performance Expectations, meet the Board’s Operational Performance Expectations, and complete the obligations of the contract, or comply with all applicable laws. If the Board does not renew the charter, then the charter expires at the end of the contracted term.

### **Early Renewal Process**

A.R.S. §15-183(I) (2) allows a charter holder to apply for early renewal. The Board has adopted a policy that establishes the eligibility criteria to qualify to apply for early renewal. For details regarding the early renewal process, see [Appendix A: Eligibility to Apply for Early Renewal of a Charter Contract](#).

### **III. COMPONENTS OF THE RENEWAL APPLICATION**

The Renewal Application is a web-based form that must be submitted through the ASBCS Online system. Renewal Application requirements are based upon the charter holder's performance record in relation to criteria outlined in the Financial Performance Framework, and the alignment of officers, directors, members and partners of the Charter Holder on record as part of the charter contract with the Arizona Corporation Commissions ("ACC") submissions.

#### **Detailed Business Plan**

This section includes the required documents and instructions for the organizational membership and financial sustainability components of the Renewal Application.

#### **Organizational Membership**

A charter holder whose officers, directors, members and partners reflected in the charter contract do not match the current documents on file with ACC will be required to complete the Organizational Membership section of the application. A charter holder that is required to submit an organizational membership response is required to submit documentation that provides evidence that the charter holder has taken action to reconcile discrepancies in the organizational membership on file with ASBCS and ACC.

The lack of alignment of officers, directors, members and partners of the charter holder on record as part of the charter contract with ACC submissions will be recorded in Measure 2.d:Board Alignment with ACC or Measure 2.e: Timely Submission of the charter holder's operational dashboard.

#### **Financial Sustainability**

A charter holder that does not meet the Board's financial performance expectations will be required to complete the Financial Sustainability section of the Renewal Application by submitting a financial performance response. This information will be used by the Board when it considers whether to grant the charter holder a renewal charter contract. At the time of consideration of renewal by the Board, the most current audit information will be provided.

For more information on preparing a financial performance response and the criteria Board staff will use to evaluate the response, see Appendix C of the Board's [Financial Performance Framework and Guidance](#) and the additional resources available under "Financial Performance Response" on the [Board's website](#).

**NOTE:** *All responses will be available for public review. If references will be made to or include any sensitive information (e.g., bank account numbers), redact that information prior to submission.*

#### **Renewal Assurances and Understanding**

This section contains the text of the Renewal Assurances and Understanding document. The document is an attestation that the charter holder will continue to implement the academic/educational plan as described in the charter contract and as amended. The charter holder may make amendments to the charter contract through the appropriate processes as described in the [Guide to Amending a Charter](#).

#### **Signature**

The charter representative must digitally sign the application by entering his/her password into the identified field in the Signature section of the Renewal Application. By signing the form, the charter representative is acknowledging that the information in the application is accurate and complete, and is agreeing to the terms

outlined in the Renewal Assurances and Understanding form. To prevent unintentional submission of the Renewal Application, complete the signature section after all other sections have been completed. A Renewal Application cannot be submitted until it is signed by the charter representative.

#### **IV. CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE UPDATE**

As part of the Renewal process, the charter holder is provided the opportunity to ensure its own compliance with certain contractual terms that can be amended. If a charter holder does not ensure compliance in each of these areas prior to the ASR onsite visit and Board staff identifies operational noncompliance issues, those issues will be reflected in the charter holder's operational dashboard.

The charter holder should review all contractual terms using the information on file with the Board. To view the information currently on file with the Board:

1. Log in to your ASBCS online account using the Charter Representative's user name (email address) and password. <http://online.asbcs.az.gov/>
2. Once logged into the system, you will be taken to the Dashboard.
3. On the Dashboard, choose the Charter Holder's section or tab and click on Charter Holder Name.
4. On the Dashboard, select "Detailed Information" under the "Charter Holder" heading.

Specifically, the charter holder should review and confirm information concerning the following items:

- Charter holder representative
- School governing body
- Charter holder location
- School name change
- School location
- Grades at a specific school
- Program of instruction
- Mission
- Instructional days
- Enrollment change in the current fiscal year

A description on how to review the information in each of these areas and how to make changes, if necessary, is provided below.

#### ***Charter Holder Representatives***

The charter holder representative is the individual who has the power to bind the charter holder contractually according to the charter holder's Articles of Incorporation, operating agreement, or by-laws, and is the point of contact for the Board for the purposes of communication and accountability to charter terms and conditions. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if the charter representative(s) identified in the contract is/are not current.

To review the charter representatives currently on file with the Board, select the "Representatives" tab. The charter representatives and their contact information are listed.

Should the charter holder wish to add or delete a charter representative, it must submit a Charter Representative Amendment Request through ASBCS Online.

#### ***School Governing Body***

If the corporate entity of the charter holder has a separate governing body responsible for certain school decisions, this is known as the school governing body. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if the school governing body members identified in the contract are not current.

To review the school governing body, select the “Schools” tab. The members will be listed separately for each school under the “Governing Body” tab.

Should the charter holder wish to add or delete a school governing body member, it must submit a School Governing Body Amendment Request through ASBCS Online.

### ***Charter Holder and School Location***

The charter contract identifies the physical and mailing addresses for both the charter holder, the corporate entity, and for any schools operated under the charter. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if the addresses in the contract do not accurately reflect the addresses of the charter holder and the school(s) it operates.

Should a charter holder wish to change the address(es) for the charter holder, it must submit the Charter Holder Location Amendment Request. Should a charter holder wish to change the address(es) for a school, it must submit the School Location Amendment Request.

### ***Grade Levels Served***

The charter contract identifies the grade levels the charter holder is authorized to serve as well as the specific grade levels the charter holder may and is serving at each of the schools it operates. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if the grade levels it serves do not align with the grade levels described in the contract.

To review the grade levels the charter holder is authorized to serve, select the “Detailed Information” link from the gray bar, then the “Grades” tab. The most current information will be found at the top of the list with an “Effective Date” but no “End Date.”

To review the grade levels the charter holder is authorized to serve at each of the schools, select the “Schools” tab. The authorized grade levels will be listed separately for each school under the “Grades” tab.

Should the charter holder wish to change the grade levels it is authorized to serve under the **charter**, it must submit a Grade Level Change to Charter Amendment Request through ASBCS Online.

Should the charter holder wish to change the grade levels it is authorized to serve at a specific **school**, it must submit a School Specific Change in Grades Served Amendment Request through ASBCS Online.

### ***Program of Instruction***

The program of instruction should describe the methods of instruction, criteria for promotion from one level to the next, and graduation requirements. The charter holder’s program of instruction should align with the charter mission, educational philosophy, and target population as described in the charter. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if the methods of instruction, criteria for promotion from one level to the next, and/or graduation requirements currently used at the schools operated by the charter holder do not align with those described in the charter contract.

If you do not have a copy of the charter contract and any amendments that have been submitted to the Board, please submit a records request to [charterschoolboard@asbcs.az.gov](mailto:charterschoolboard@asbcs.az.gov) to review the program of instruction currently associated with the schools operated by the charter holder.

Should the charter holder wish to modify the program of instruction, it must submit a Program of Instruction Amendment Request through ASBCS Online. If the charter holder is seeking to make changes to the charter holder’s delivery method to include the provision of specific online courses or the provision of a comprehensive offering of courses that would constitute an online school under A.R.S. §15-808 for grade levels currently

approved in the charter, the charter holder will be required to submit the Arizona Online Instruction Program of Instruction Amendment Request.

### ***Mission Statement***

The mission statement should be accurate on ASBCS online and be the same as the mission statement on the charter’s website, in the handbook, etc. The mission statement should explain how the program of instruction addresses the needs of the students and community the school serves.

To review the mission statement currently associated with the schools operated by the charter holder, select the “General” tab. The mission statement is listed at the bottom of the page. Should the charter holder wish to modify the mission statement, it must submit a Charter Mission Amendment Request through ASBCS Online.

### ***Instructional Days***

While all charter schools must operate using a school calendar and daily instructional schedule(s) that ensure compliance with A.R.S. §15-901 regarding annual instructional hours for each grade served, there is flexibility in the number of instructional days that may be provided. The number of instructional days on file with the Board are contractual and must accurately reflect the number of instructional days in the school’s calendar. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if it is not providing the number of instructional days identified in the contract and/or the minimum annual instructional hours for each grade served.

To review the contractual instructional days for the charter schools operated by the charter holder, select the relevant school on the “Schools” tab, then select the “General” tab for the school. The contractual instructional days are listed as “Contractual Days” in the “General Information” area.

Should the charter holder wish to modify the contractually required instructional days, it must submit an Instructional Days Amendment Request. This request may apply to a specific school, or to multiple schools operated under a charter.

### ***Enrollment Cap***

The charter contract identifies the enrollment cap which limits the number of students the charter holder is authorized to serve. The charter holder is out of compliance with the charter contract if the number of students it serves exceeds the enrollment cap identified in the contract.

To review the enrollment cap, select the “Detailed Information” link from the gray bar, then the “Enrollment” tab. The most current information will be found at the bottom of the list with an “Effective Date” but no “End Date.”

Should the charter holder wish to change the enrollment cap, it must submit an Enrollment Cap Amendment Request through ASBCS Online.

## **V. RENEWAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

### **A. Access the System**

Log in to your ASBCS online account using the Charter Representative’s user name (email address) and password. <http://online.asbcs.az.gov/>

- If you do not remember your password, locate the “Forgot Password” icon on the log in page and click it to reset your password. You will receive an email from the ASBCS System Administrator ([charterschoolboard@asbcs.az.gov](mailto:charterschoolboard@asbcs.az.gov)) with instructions.
- Once logged into the system, you will be taken to the Dashboard.
- Under the Charter Holder heading, click on “Submit Form”.
- Under the Applications heading, click on “Renewal Application”.

## Submit Form

Applications	Amendments
> Replication Application	> Add Charter Grades
> Renewal Application	> Remove Charter Grades
> Transfer Authorizer Application	> Instructional Days
> Transfer School Application	> Charter Mission
	> Charter Holder Status
	> Procurement Laws Exception
	> Program of Instruction
	> USFRCS Exception
	> AZ Online Instruction

### B. Determine Required Submissions

1. Identify the sections of the Renewal Application that require a response.
  - o The notification will state if the charter holder is waived from any submission requirements.
  - o When logged into the system and viewing the Renewal Application, each section that requires a response includes a description of the required information and a link for adding an attachment to the form.

**Detailed Business Plan**

**Charter Holder's Organizational Membership\***  
Provide evidence of appropriate filing(s) to demonstrate compliance with the terms of the contract.

The Renewal Application Instructions provide information on completing this section. The Help tab provides links to the Renewal Application Instructions and Detailed Business Plan Section Checklist.

Currently Attached Files:

- There are currently no attached files

Add a new attachment

*NOTE: Attached files are not uploaded or saved automatically. You must save the application in order to save the files.*

2. Locate information regarding Financial Sustainability submission requirements
  - o The dashboard representation of the charter holder's financial performance, based upon the indicators and measures adopted by the Board, is available through ASBCS Online. Instructions for accessing the financial dashboard are as follows:
    - Go to <http://online.asbcs.az.gov><sup>1</sup>
    - Under the "Search" option, select "Charter Holders"
    - Enter part or all of the Charter Holder name and click "Search"
    - Select the applicable Charter Holder from the search results
    - Select the "Performance" tab
  - o Guidance regarding the financial performance response, and the criteria Board staff will use to evaluate the response can be found in Appendix C of the Board's [Financial Performance Framework and Guidance](#). Charter holders that are required to submit a financial performance response are encouraged to review this document to understand how to prepare the information for submission. To locate all relevant documents:

<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to log into ASBCS online. If you do log into ASBCS online using the Charter Representative's account, the information will be located in the Charter Holder's Detailed Information section under the "Performance" tab.

- Go to the Board’s website (<http://asbcs.az.gov>)
- Under “Charter School Operators”, click on “Performance Expectations”
- Select the “Financial Performance” tab
- Locate and download the Financial Performance Framework and Guidance

3. Locate information regarding Organizational Membership submission requirements

- A charter holder that is required to submit an organizational membership response is **required to submit evidentiary documentation** that demonstrates the charter holder has taken action to reconcile discrepancies in the organizational membership on file with ASBCS and ACC.
  - To check the organizational membership on file with the Board:
    1. Go to <http://online.asbcs.az.gov>
    2. Under the “Search” option, select “Charter Holders”
    3. Enter part or all of the Charter Holder name and click “Search”
    4. Select the applicable Charter Holder from the search results
    5. Select the “Board” tab
    6. Make note of the officers, directors, members, or partners listed.
  - To check the organizational membership on file with ACC:
    1. Go to the [ACC website](#)
    2. Click the “eCorp” link on the right side of the page
    3. In the top right corner, a search box appears that says “Search for Entity Name”
    4. Type the Charter Holder name
    5. Select the Charter Holder from the list
    6. Make note of the officers, directors, members, or partners listed.

If the officers, directors, members, or partners reflected on ASBCS Online do not match the current members on file with ACC, the charter holder must submit documentation of the steps taken to reconcile the discrepancy.

The charter holder may need to:

1. Correct the information on file with ASBCS by completing and submitting the appropriate amendment request through the amendment process<sup>2</sup>,
2. Correct the information on file with ACC by completing and submitting the appropriate filing with ACC, OR
3. Correct both the information on file with ASBCS and ACC.

C. Submission Instructions

1. Log in to your ASBCS online account using the Charter Representative’s user name (email address) and password. <http://online.asbcs.az.gov/>
2. Upload the required information to the appropriate section of the Renewal Application
  - If the charter holder is required to complete the Organizational Membership section of the Renewal Application, the charter holder must provide evidence of the appropriate filing(s). Consider providing a screenshot of the completed filing, a notification that the filing has been

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<sup>2</sup> Guidance and requirements for submitting charter contract amendments are available on the ASBCS website in the [Guide to Amending a Charter](#).

received or processed, or a notification that the information has been updated. To submit Organizational Membership documentation:

- Click on the “Add a new attachment” link in the charter holder’s Organizational Membership section of the Renewal Application.
  - Click the “Choose File” button
  - Browse to the file and click “Open”
  - In the Brief Description text area, type “CHARTERHOLDERNAME \_Renewal \_ Organizational Membership Response”
  - Click the “Add Attachment” button
- If the charter holder is required to submit a Financial Performance Response for the Detailed Business Plan section:
    - Click on the “Add a new attachment” link in the Charter Holder’s Financial Sustainability section of the Renewal Application.
    - Click the “Choose File” button
    - Browse to the file and click “Open”
    - In the Brief Description text area, type “CHARTER HOLDER NAME\_ Renewal\_ Financial Performance Response”
    - Click the “Add Attachment” button
3. Review all sections of the application. Once all documents have been uploaded to the application, it is ready for submission. A submitted application cannot be changed. If the application needs to be changed, the submitted application can be withdrawn. If an application is withdrawn, a new application must be submitted prior to the due date stated in the notification email.
4. Submit the application. **Renewal Application packages must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. MST on the deadline date**, which is identified in the charter holder’s renewal notification email. Late submissions will not be accepted. To submit the application:
- Scroll down to the Charter Representative Signature section located at the bottom of the Renewal Application form.
  - Enter the charter representative’s password and click “Sign Form”
  - Click “Submit to ASBCS”

## **VI. ACADEMIC SYSTEMS REVIEW**

As part of the Renewal process, Board staff conducts a comprehensive on-site visit to gain an understanding of how the school develops and implements the following:

- A curriculum designed to improve student achievement.
- A system for monitoring the integration of the Arizona academic standards.
- A system for monitoring and documenting student proficiency.
- A professional development plan that supports implementation of the curriculum.

### ***Purpose***

The ASR is designed to gather evidence regarding the school’s implementation in providing a comprehensive program of instruction and designing a method to measure pupil progress toward pupil outcomes, as required in

the charter contract. A set of criteria is used by Board staff to review the school's implementation of its academic systems.

### ***Criteria***

The ASR criteria determines the extent to which the school has:

1. An explicit, written curriculum for core content area that is aligned with Arizona academic standards.
2. A systematic process for reviewing and evaluating the curriculum, at specific intervals, for alignment to Arizona academic standards and improving student academic outcomes for the population served.
3. A teacher evaluation system to monitor the integration of state standards into instruction.
4. An assessment plan to track, analyze, and monitor student academic performance.
5. A professional development plan that aligns with the program of instruction and best practices.

### ***Site Visit Components***

The ASR on-site visit focuses on the following:

1. Classroom observations of multiple classrooms to view the program of instruction in action.
2. A review of documents to ensure compliance with the charter contract, and specific state and federal mandates.
3. A review of documents to evaluate the school's academic systems, based on the ASR criteria.
4. A discussion with the school leadership to review initial findings and clarify any issues and/or concerns.

### ***Timeframe***

The ASR onsite visit is an unannounced visit that will occur within the current fiscal year. The charter holder is notified of the two-week window of when the ASR visit will take place. The window will occur after the application package is due and prior to board consideration.

### ***After the Site Visit***

Within 10 business days of the site visit, Board staff will provide the charter holder a report detailing the findings of the contractual compliance review and evidentiary documentation of the academic systems review. If any noncompliance issues were identified on the site visit, this report will list the required documentation, the due date for submitting required documentation, and the measure recorded on the charter holder's operational performance dashboard.

## **VII. BOARD CONSIDERATION**

After the application package has been evaluated and the ASR site visit is completed, a Renewal Portfolio is prepared to include:

- Executive Summary
- Renewal Summary Review
- Academic Dashboards for each school operated by the charter holder
- Financial and Operational Dashboards for the charter holder
- Renewal Application submission
- Five-Year Interval Review Final Report

- Financial response evaluation (if applicable)
- Financial response submission (if applicable)

A complete Renewal Portfolio is presented to the Board for consideration. The charter holder will receive a notification email when the charter holder's Renewal Application has been scheduled on the Board's agenda.

The day of the Board meeting the charter holder should be prepared to address the Board with a brief introductory statement and answer any questions. The charter holder should arrange for any staff to be present that are qualified to address questions regarding the performance of the charter holder.

After considering the Renewal Portfolio and statements made at the meeting, the Board will decide to renew the charter or deny the Renewal Application. The charter holder will receive a letter outlining the next steps, based on the Board's renewal decision.

## APPENDIX A

### Eligibility to Apply for Early Renewal of a Charter Contract Policy Statement

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A.R.S. § 15-183(l)(2) allows a charter operator to apply for early renewal.

- At least nine months before the charter school's intended renewal consideration, the operator of the charter school shall submit a letter of intent to the sponsor to apply for early renewal.
- The sponsor shall review fiscal audits and academic performance data for the charter school that are annually collected by the sponsor, review the current contract between the sponsor and the charter school and provide the qualifying charter school with a renewal application.
- On submission of a complete application, the sponsor shall give written notice of its consideration of the renewal application.

#### **Board Policy:**

A charter holder may submit a letter of intent to apply for early renewal to the Board. Within 15 business days of receipt of a charter holder's timely letter of intent to apply for early renewal, the Board shall review those items described in statute to determine whether the applicant is eligible to apply for early renewal and provide qualified charter holders with an early renewal application.

An applicant qualifies to apply for early renewal if:

- The request is submitted at least 24 months prior to the charter expiration date;
- The applicant has been operating schools under the charter for at least five years;
- The applicant meets the Board's Academic Performance Expectations as defined in the Academic Performance Framework and Guidance;
- The applicant is waived from submitting the Detailed Business Plan Section of the renewal application because:
  - The applicant meets the Board's Financial Performance Expectations, and
  - The applicant's officers, directors, members and partners as identified in information publicly available through the Arizona Corporation Commission align with those identified in the charter contract; and
- Within the last 3 years, the applicant did not have any compliance matters that required action by the Board or other government agencies; or when an Operational Performance Dashboard is available, the applicant meets the Operational Performance Expectations.

An applicant who is eligible to apply for early renewal shall submit the early renewal application no later than 1 month after the charter holder receives notification of its eligibility to apply for early renewal.

An applicant must continue to meet the eligibility requirements identified in this policy up to and until the Board has considered the Application for Early Renewal. If the applicant's eligibility status changes prior to the Board's consideration of the application, the Board shall not consider the application.

An applicant who does not meet the requirements of this policy may resubmit a letter of intent to apply for early renewal at any time prior to the early renewal deadline and the Board shall reevaluate the applicant's eligibility to apply for early renewal.

*Historical Note:*

*Effective:* April 14, 2014  
*Board Approval Date:* April 14, 2014  
*Revised:* April 13, 2015