

## Arizona State Board for Charter Schools



### Renewal Application Instructions

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## ***I. RENEWAL PROCESS OVERVIEW***

Authorized by Arizona Revised Statute, Title 15, Chapter 1, Article 8, effective September 16, 1994, charter schools are public schools that were established to provide a learning environment that will improve pupil achievement and will provide additional academic choices for parents and pupils.

According to A.R.S. § 15-183 (I), an approved plan to establish a charter school is effective for a fifteen year term. At least eighteen months before the expiration of the approved plan, the charter holder may apply for renewal. A charter holder that elects to apply for renewal shall file an application for renewal at least fifteen months before the expiration of the approved plan. The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (the Board) will consider renewal based upon the charter holder's past performance, including the pupil achievement data of each school operated by the charter holder, as well as multiple sources of evidence gathered during the term of the charter and information contained in the application package. The charter holder will be notified at least twelve months prior to the expiration of the charter if it will not be renewed.

A charter holder becomes eligible to apply for renewal eighteen months before the charter expires. Eligibility for renewal is based solely on the expiration date of the charter. Based upon the charter holder's ability to meet identified performance criteria, Board staff will prepare the renewal application components. At least eighteen months before the charter expires, Board staff will notify the charter holder via email of eligibility to apply for renewal with a Notification Letter and will make available to the charter holder a customized renewal application and a summary review of the charter's performance record over the term of the charter.

A charter holder may then choose to submit a renewal application package. If the charter holder chooses not to apply, the charter expires at the end of its contracted term.

Renewal of a charter is based on affirmative evidence in three areas:

- Meeting Academic Performance Expectations
- Meeting Financial Performance Expectations
- Meeting Operational Performance Expectations

Evaluation of the charter holder's success in these three areas is based on a variety of information that will serve as sources of evidence in determining renewal. These sources include:

- Pupil achievement data
- Independent financial audits
- Five year interval summary reviews
- Site visit reports
- Monitoring reports
- Application package for renewal

The charter holder that elects to apply for renewal will have at least three months from the time of notification of eligibility to complete and submit the renewal application package. The charter holder will submit the charter renewal application package online to the Board by the application package due date identified in the Notification Letter. Staff may conduct a site visit following submission of the application package. Once the application package is submitted, Board staff will prepare a staff report that provides information for the Board's consideration of whether or not to renew the charter. The staff report will contain a summary of performance and compliance in the three key areas and information gathered during a site visit, if required. The Board will also have access to any and all renewal-related documents.

## RENEWAL PROCESS AT A GLANCE

Action	Description	Approximate Timeline
<b>Conduct a Comprehensive Review of Charter Information</b>	The Board staff conducts a comprehensive review of all information related to the charter, including the charter’s public file, site visits, pupil achievement data, fiscal and audit compliance, and legal and contractual compliance information.	Approximately 24 months to 18 months prior to charter expiration
<b>Notify Charter Holder of Eligibility to Renew Charter</b>	Board staff notifies the authorized representative via email that the charter holder is eligible to apply for renewal. At the time of notification, the authorized representative receives the appropriate renewal application information, the application package due date, and a summary review of the charter’s performance record over the term of the charter.	18 months prior to charter expiration
<b>Receive Application Package</b>	The charter holder must respond to all requirements of the application.	Due within three months of notice of eligibility to renew
<b>Review Application Package</b>	Staff will review and score the application package. Staff may conduct a renewal site visit for the purpose of confirming information submitted in the application.	Within three months of receipt of the submitted application
<b>Prepare Renewal Report</b>	Based upon the totality of information, including the application package for renewal, the on-site visit, pupil achievement data and other pertinent information collected through reviews, audits, monitoring reports, and site visits, Board staff prepares a report of findings to be forwarded to the Board at the time of consideration of renewal.	Within three months of receipt of the submitted application
<b>Decision by the Board</b>	The Board may take action to renew a charter for a new term. If the Board votes to not renew a charter, the charter operator must be notified at least 12 months prior to the expiration of the charter.	12 months prior to charter expiration

## II. RENEWAL APPLICATION PACKAGE INSTRUCTIONS

**General Application Information:** If the charter holder applies to be renewed, in addition to any other requirements, the application for renewal includes an academic plan and a detailed business plan. Because charter holder performance varies, the application for each charter holder will be prepared based upon prior performance. Certain requirements in the application may be waived for charter holders who consistently demonstrate the ability to meet or exceed performance standards as identified in the Board's **Performance Framework**.

An authorized representative will be notified by an email Notification Letter of the charter holder's eligibility to apply for renewal. The Notification Letter will include an explanation of how to access the application through ASBCS Online. For these reasons, it is important for authorized representatives to have current email addresses on record with the Board. An applicant will submit the completed application package for renewal through ASBCS Online. Because portions of the application package will be uploaded separately for the online application, applicants should review all portions of the application prior to preparing for submission.

### II a. Academic Performance Section

The Board has established academic performance expectations for the charter schools it sponsors. The Academic Performance Framework communicates the Board's academic expectations and measures of academic performance. A charter holder's academic performance will be considered by the Board at the time of renewal in considering whether to renew the charter contract.

Established targets are used to determine whether the charter holder is meeting the academic performance expectations set forth in the Academic Performance Framework. The determination is completed using the most recent State assessment data and up to five years of prior assessment data. At the time the charter holder receives the Notification Letter, Board staff will make available the charter holder's results for each of the Academic Performance Framework's measures in the "Charter Application" folder of the charter holder's Document Management System (DMS) in ASBCS Online.

#### Charter Holder's Academic Performance

For renewal purposes, charter holders operating schools that receive an overall rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Falls Far Below Standard" on the Academic Performance Framework will be required to complete the Academic Performance Section of the renewal application. This required information will be used by the Board to inform its decision-making. The charter holder's response must focus on each measure where the charter holder received a "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Falls Far Below Standard" on the Academic Performance Framework. For information to include in the required response, see the "Required Information" portion of the Academic Performance Framework and Guidance document. Required information submitted will be evaluated using a scoring rubric.

*NOTE: Based upon the Academic Performance Framework, charter holders with schools with an overall rating of "Meets Standard" or "Exceeds Standard" for each of the previous two years may be waived from additional submission requirements as identified in the Academic Performance Section of the renewal application.*

## II b. Detailed Business Plan Section

In accordance with A.R.S. § 15-183 (I), the application for renewal shall include a detailed business plan. The Detailed Business Plan Section is in two parts: Charter Holder's Organizational Membership and Charter Holder's Financial Sustainability. An applicant may be required to complete one or both parts of the section. Some applicants will be waived from completing this section of the application entirely.

### 1. Charter Holder's Organizational Membership

Charter holders with contracts that are not up-to-date with regard to the organizational structure will be required to complete the Charter Holder's Organizational Membership section of the application. If the officers, directors, members and partners reflected in the contract do not match the current documents on file with the Arizona Corporation Commission, the charter holder must either file the appropriate notification request for Board consideration through the amendment process, make the appropriate filing with the Arizona Corporation Commission, or both. For the purpose of the application package, the charter holder must provide evidence of the appropriate filing(s).

### 2. Charter Holder's Financial Sustainability

In making the determination that a charter holder is required to complete the Charter Holder's Financial Sustainability section, the charter holder's financial performance will be evaluated using the Board's [Financial Performance Framework](#) and the most recent audit reporting package reviewed by Board staff.<sup>1</sup> A charter holder that receives two or more "Does Not Meet Standard" and/or one or more "Falls Far Below Standard" will be required to submit this portion of the application, which involves providing additional information regarding the charter holder's financial situation to the Board. 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.

The Board has not prescribed the specific information that must be submitted by the charter holder, but the charter holder's response should focus on each measure where the charter holder received a "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Falls Far Below Standard". The charter holder's response should not address all measures in the framework unless the charter holder failed to meet the target for all measures. For those charter holders required to complete this section, at the time the charter holder receives the Notification Letter, Board staff will make available the charter holder's results for each of the Financial Performance Framework's measures in the "Charter Application" folder of the charter holder's Document Management System (DMS) in ASBCS Online.

In preparing the required response that will be submitted to the Board, the charter holder should evaluate its own financial situation and, for those measures where the charter holder failed to meet the target, determine the information that will best explain the charter holder's situation and/or efforts. For examples of items that the charter holder may want to consider addressing in or including with its required response, please see the "Things to Consider if Required to Submit Additional Information" section of the Board's [Financial Performance Framework and Guidance](#) document.

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<sup>1</sup> Most charter holders' audit reporting packages must be submitted to the Board by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Due to staffing constraints, the financial performance of charter holders notified of their eligibility to apply for renewal in November may be determined by using the prior fiscal year's audit reporting package.

### **III. SUBMITTING THE RENEWAL APPLICATION PACKAGE**

#### **Preparing the Application Package for Submission:**

Applicants are encouraged to review each required section of the application to ensure documents are prepared and uploaded to the appropriate application section before submitting the application package. The system does not allow for revisions once the application package has been submitted.

If a charter holder is not required to complete the Academic Performance Section and the Detailed Business Plan Section of the application, the online renewal application will have a statement in both sections of the application that informs the charter holder that nothing is required to be submitted for either section. In this instance, where the charter holder was waived from submitting both sections of the application, the authorized representative's digital signature will be the only requirement for submission of an online application package.

#### **Submitting the Application Package:**

Once the application is complete and ready for submission, the authorized representative will digitally sign the application by typing in his/her password and clicking "Sign Form". The online renewal application will indicate that the signature was accepted and the date it was signed. Once submitted, the authorized representative will receive notification indicating submission status as well as a link to a copy of the submitted application. The authorized representative has the option of withdrawing the application at any time.

Renewal application packages will be submitted online at <http://online.asbcs.az.gov>. **Renewal application packages must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. MST on the deadline date** which is approximately ninety calendar days from the date the charter holder was notified of eligibility to apply for renewal. The deadline date will be identified in the charter holder's Notification Letter.

#### ***IV. TERMS TO KNOW***

**Academic Performance Framework** – Indicators of academic performance designed to evaluate a school’s performance including Student Progress over Time (Growth), Student Achievement (Status), State Accountability, and Post-Secondary Readiness

**Application** – The Board-approved forms and instructions, which are available through ASBCS Online and in writing

**Application Package** – The application, narrative, and documents described in the application

**Authorized Representative** – Individual with the power to bind a charter holder contractually according to the charter holder’s Articles of Incorporation, operating agreement, or by-laws

**Board** – The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

**Charter** – A contract between a person and the Board to operate a charter school under A.R.S. § 15-181

**Charter Holder** – A person who enters into a charter with the Board

**Financial Performance Framework** - Near-term and sustainability indicators designed to evaluate a charter holder’s financial performance

**MST** – Mountain Standard Time

**Person** – An individual, partnership, corporation, association, or public or private organization of any kind