



## **New Charter School Application Process**

**Submit To:**  
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## New Charter School Application Process

The Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program provides Minnesota students with high quality choices in public education through our portfolio of high-performing charter schools and is a model of excellence in authorizing throughout the state and nation.

- *Authorizing Program Vision: Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will authorize high quality charter schools that improve all pupil learning, all student achievement, and promote service to others.*
- *Authorizing Program Mission: Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will improve all pupil learning and all student achievement with service to others as its core.*

### **Minnesota Charter Schools**

Charter schools are independent public schools of choice for parents and students. The first charter school in the nation opened in Minnesota in 1992 and charter schools continue to be a popular choice for students seeking an alternative to traditional public schools. Teachers, parents and others begin charter schools when they see an educational need and want to design a school to meet that need. The primary purpose of a charter school is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. Additional purposes include: (1) increase learning opportunities for all pupils; (2) encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; (3) measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes; (4) establish new forms of accountability for schools; or (5) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site. Charter schools employ Minnesota licensed teachers, offer services to special needs students and require students to take state and national tests to assure academic accountability and improvement. Charter schools are open to all, do not charge tuition and have no admission requirements to enroll.

**Eligible New Charter School Applicants:** An individual or group of individuals interested in starting a charter school are invited to apply to VOA-MN for authorization per state charter school statute. To apply to VOA-MN, applications **must:**

- Have submitted a “Letter of Intent to Apply” and received a positive determination to be invited to apply by VOA-MN.
- Have Certificates of Attendance at the required VOA-MN Pre-Application Meeting. The required meeting will be a half day and a minimum of three board members listed on the application must participate. The meeting will be offered in December with the specific date yet to be determined.
- Contain a minimum of five board members, including at least one Minnesota licensed teacher and strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location.
- Demonstrate alignment to the VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program mission and vision.
- Intend to serve at least six grade levels K-12 and not be a stand-alone middle school. Preference is given to K-12 proposals.
- Contain a well-defined service-learning component.

**Pre-Application Approval:** Developers must submit an “Intent to Apply” letter to VOA-MN at least 20 months before July 1 of the year the new charter school plans to serve students to qualify for consideration to submit a full application. The Intent to Apply letter content requirements include:

- The proposed name of the school and grades to be served (must include at least six grades K-12 and not be a stand-alone middle school).
- The enrollment targets by grade for the initial 5 years.
- The anticipated year the developers would like the school to open.
- The proposed location of the school with justification for that location.
- The names of a founding board, of a minimum of five members, that is intentionally diverse, and has strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location of school development.

Directory information must be included for each member. A majority of founding board members must live in the proposed geographic location and include at least one MN licensed teacher and one parent residing in the proposed school geographic service area.

- A brief explanation of how the school would be intentionally diverse and not cater to one or two ethnic groups.
- A brief explanation of program highlights and learning philosophy and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the target geographic location.
- A brief explanation of why the developers are interested in VOA-MN as an authorizer and brief plan to incorporate service-learning (mission-fit).
- The developers must disclose if a consulting firm is participating in the development of the proposed charter school in any way and potential conflict of interests must be identified and addressed.
- The developers must disclose if a charter management organization or an educational management organization is participating in the development of the proposed charter school and include any contracts/agreements.
- The letter of intent should be no more than six pages.

An electronic copy of the Intent to Apply letter should be emailed to the CSAP Senior Program Manager at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org).

The Intent to Apply letter will be reviewed by two-three peer reviewers and the CSAP Senior Program Manager. The decision will be made and communicated by the Program Manager. If a Letter of Intent to Apply is approved by VOA-MN, the charter school board may submit a full application. Within four weeks of receiving a Letter of Intent, VOA-MN will notify developers in writing as to whether, or not, the developers are invited to submit a full new school application to VOA-MN. **If**/when an Intent to Apply letter is approved by VOA-MN, an applicant does not have to repeat this phase of the review process.

**Application Deadline:** Developers must submit an application to VOA-MN at least 18 months before July 1 of the year the new charter school plans to serve students. The following is an estimated timeline upon receipt of the school's application:

- Approximately five business days for technical review and distribution of applications to peer reviewers
- Approximately 5-10 business days for peer desk review process
- Approximately 5-10 business days for applicant to provide additional clarification / information based on concerns expressed in desk review.
- Approximately five business days after the peer reviewers receive supplemental information in the form of an amended application from applicant, applicant interview occurs.
- Approximately 5-10 business days, final determination is issued from VOA-MN to applicant.
- Total estimated time span: 6-8 weeks.

**Application Submission:** Applicants must submit one electronic copy (in the form of both a PDF and Word document) to the VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org).

**Application Review and Interview** - VOA-MN utilizes peer reviewers from high quality charter schools in the VOA-MN Network to review the application materials guided by the Application Review Rubric. No peer reviewer will be selected that may have a real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to the review of the application (e.g., employee of an existing school that is reasonably close geographical proximity to the applying school). Once the initial peer desk review is completed, applicants and peer reviewers will participate in the interview process. The applicant interview focuses on school alignment with the charter school authorizing program's vision and mission, the educational and financial viability of the proposal and the developing group's

capacity to implement an idea into a reality. VOA-MN may request follow-up materials prior to the interview process in order to further assess the quality of the application and developing team.

**Application preference will be given to:**

- Applicants with the majority of board members who have strong grassroots ties to the anticipated location of school development.
- Applicants replicating a successful charter school model and leadership representation on the founding board from the school being replicated.
- Applicants who plan to serve students grades K-12.

**Final Determination** - After the interview process the application peer reviewers make a recommendation to VOA-MN Authorizing Program leadership to approve or deny each charter school application. The VOA-MN Authorizing Program will communicate in writing the determination to the developers. Regardless of the determination, VOA-MN will provide the developing team with feedback from the application review process.

**APPLICATION FORMAT**

Directions for completion of the application materials should be carefully read and followed. Incomplete applications or those not following the required outline below will **NOT** be reviewed by VOA-MN. The completed forms below must be included in the application.

<b>FOUR COPIES: REQUIRED APPLICATION FORMS &amp; ELEMENTS</b>	
<b>FORM/ELEMENT</b>	<b># OF PAGES COUNTED AS:</b>
Cover Sheet	Does not count toward page limit
Founder Contact List	Does not count toward page limit
Table of Contents	Does not count toward page limit
Narrative/Work Plan & Budget:	Up to 90 pages; suggested category page limits:
• Executive Summary	1 page (may be single-spaced)
• School Foundation	43 pages approx..
• Pre-Operational Planning	31 pages approx.
• Early Learning	If Applicable, 10-12 pages approx.
• Program Implementation and Budget	15 pages approx.
• Three-Year Operational Budget Summary Form	2 pages approx.
• Three-Year Operational Budget Narrative	7 pages (may be single-spaced) approx.
Founder Résumés	Does not count toward page limit
Public School Conversion Information (if applicable, see Information Sheet).	Does not count toward page limit
Program Expansion Information (if applicable, see Information Sheet).	Does not count toward page limit

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

The charter school application is to be original work of the applicants. If a source is used, the materials that are paraphrased or copied must be cited appropriately. If a template is used, the application is to be customized so that it clearly describes and meets the needs of the applicant as well as the application requirements.

# **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Each application must contain the following elements.**

## **COVER SHEET**

Provide all requested information. Type information in the form fields on the attached form.

## **FOUNDER CONTACT LIST**

Provide information for ALL individuals directly involved with the development of this new charter public school including people such as founders, board members, developers, grant writers, and consultants. Type all information in the form fields on the attached form.

## **Application Outline:**

Below are the elements that must be included in the Narrative/Work Plan and Budget. Follow instructions carefully. Please use section and sub-section outline headings throughout the application.

- **APPLICATION COVER SHEET**
- **SCHOOL FOUNDERS CONTACT SHEET**
- **CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE AT VOA-MN PRE-APPLICATION MEETING**

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Provides a one-page overview of the school that is planned.

Include: program highlights/learning philosophy, grade levels to be served, anticipated location, and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the community in which the school will be located.

## **II. SCHOOL FOUNDATION**

### **A. Vision & Mission**

Provides vision and mission statements that reflect the school's goals and purpose.

- Vision: Provide a vision statement that outlines what the school wants to be (something to be pursued).
- Mission: Provide a mission statement that outlines what the school is now (something to be accomplished).

### **B. Need and Demand**

Application must thoroughly explain the compelling need for establishing the new charter school in the targeted location.

- Provide a description and location market-based research as evidence of the need for a new charter school in the anticipated location identified.
- Thoroughly explain community support and ties to develop a new charter school in the anticipated location.
- Identify the nearby district, charter or private schools and the education programs already offered. Include student performance data and analysis based on the state assessment system when available (public schools).
- Evidence of demand for the proposed school in the community to be served. "Demand" means the desire of prospective families to enroll their children in the proposed school's education program. Demand can be evidenced by, for example, feedback from listening sessions or survey results from prospective families.

### **C. Statutory Purpose(s)**

Application must:

- Describe the new and unique characteristics this school will provide to students that distinguish it from other education options available to students.
- Describe how the proposed school will meet the primary statutory purpose of a charter school, "to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement."

- Identify one or more of the additional five statutory purposes for charter schools the school intends to meet (see Minn. Stat. 124E.01, Subd.1), and provide a comprehensive explanation of how the school will meet those additional purposes (should show alignment to mission and vision).

### III. **LEARNING PROGRAM:** Presents a high-quality educational program with accountability for student achievement.

#### A. **Educational Philosophy, Curricula, Tools, Methods and Instructional Techniques**

- Describe the guiding educational philosophy of this school.
- Provide an overview of the proposed curricula, tools, methods and instructional techniques that support the educational philosophy.
- Describe the process the school will use to ensure the curricula will align with Minnesota State Academic Standards.
- Cite and explain research evidence demonstrating these curricula, tools, techniques and methods supporting student achievement (if applicable, identify schools involved).
- Identify the contribution this charter school will make to help close the achievement gap and assist educationally and economically disadvantaged and other students to succeed academically.
- Section must include how the proposed school design will meet or exceed the outcome expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students (ie. World's Best Workforce goals).
- Section should clearly indicate if the new charter school is planning to incorporate: digital, online, hybrid or blended learning; and/or project-based learning; and/or work-based learning.

#### B. **Special Education**

- Describe how this school will provide services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.
- Include a description of the proposed Child Find process that will be used at this school.

#### C. **Students with Limited English Proficiency**

- Describe how this school will provide services to students with limited English language skills.

**D. Assessment and Accountability:** VOA-MN requires that the schools we authorize be held to a high academic standard. We develop a charter contract accountability/program plan with the school that includes goals based on state standardized test scores as well as an authorizer-school agreed upon formative assessment(s) (e.g. NWEA, IBST, state OLPA). In addition to describing the justification that the applicant has for the interim assessment they propose to use and goals aligned to that assessment, we request the following information about the school's commitment to assessment and accountability.

- Identify the anticipated interim standardized assessment that will be used and why that assessment was chosen.
- Describe how the school will use assessment data to drive decisions about the learning program and strategic direction of the school.

#### E. **Alignment with VOA-MN's Authorizing Program Mission, Vision, & Service Learning.**

- Explain how the school being proposed to be authorized by VOA-MN aligns with the VOA-MN Authorizing Program mission and vision.
- Explain how the school will incorporate meaningful student service learning into their school program requirements (e.g., food drives, reading to senior citizens).

### IV. **FOUNDERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

#### A. **School Founders**

Describes the primary school founders and how they are well-positioned to develop and plan a new high-quality charter school.

For each person identified on the Charter Public School Founder Contact List (see form attached to this application packet), include the following information:

- Describe her/his experience and/or involvement in K-12 education;
- Describe his/her experience with the design and operation of a charter school;
- Describe her/his expected role and responsibilities during the school's pre-operational planning period;
- Indicate whether or not each person intends to become a member of the interim board of directors;
- Indicate whether or not each person intends to apply for employment in the new charter school; and
- Describe any affiliation with other founders and current/potential consultants and vendor organizations.
- Describe the relevant work experience and expertise each person brings to the founding team.

## **B. Governance**

Describes a plan to ensure effective, accountable and representative governance over the school's operations.

### 1. Governance Model:

- Describe the board's anticipated composition and how it will help advance the mission and vision of the school.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board and how each member will help advance this understanding.

### 2. Board Recruitment: Describe specific expertise/characteristics sought in yet-to-be-recruited board members and explain the added value of those characteristics.

### 3. Plan for Fulfilling Board Obligations:

- Describe how the interim board will develop policy during the pre-operational planning period to ensure the board governs the charter public school in compliance with federal, state and local requirements (e.g., sample board policy development calendar).
- Describe the specific plan and timeline for the development of:
  - Personnel policies including the creation of job descriptions, an employee performance management program, and training programs;
  - Procurement policies and procedures for contracting with vendors and consultants that are fair and open and avoid apparent and actual conflicts of interest;
  - Conflict of interest policies; and
  - Travel approval and reimbursement policies.

### 4. Describe the process the interim board will use to:

- Develop and approve the budget;
- Monitor the financial condition of the school; and
- Provide for financial management and selecting an auditor.

## **V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. Marketing, Outreach, Enrollment & Admissions**

Describes a marketing and outreach plan, based on the compelling need established above and grassroots efforts to ensure open access to all and full enrollment.

- Identify the number of students expected to attend the school each year by grade level in the following table (add additional rows if it will take more than five years to reach full enrollment).

Year of Operation	Grade														Total
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Year 1															
Year 2															
Year 3															
Year 4															
Year 5															
Year 6															
															<b>Total</b>

- Describe the school’s marketing strategy for recruiting and retaining the school’s target population.
- Discuss how this school will intentionally and specifically conduct outreach to educationally and economically disadvantaged and hard-to-reach populations.
- Describe how the school will conduct an open admissions process including the use of a lottery to provide equal access to all students who apply.
- If the new charter school includes an instructional preschool or prekindergarten program, describe the school’s plans to fund the program. Indicate whether the program is free to all participants or fee-based. If fee-based, include the fee structure that will be used. If applicable, describe the school’s intent to pursue a Minnesota Parent Aware rating through the Accelerated Pathway for the early learning program and other possible funding sources to sustain the program if available, such as Early Learning Scholarships, Voluntary Prekindergarten or School Readiness Plus, and Title I.

**B. School Management and Staffing**

Describes a plan to ensure effective and transparent management of the school’s operations.

- Provide an organizational chart for the proposed charter school, distinguishing between governance (board), management (school leader) and other proposed school employees. Include key responsibilities for each position.
  - Include a staffing plan and timeline for the first contract period (pre-operational through the first three years of school operation). How will the school build its leadership, operations, and teaching staff?
  - Explain how this organizational structure is consistent with the mission and vision of the proposed charter school.
  - Describe the fair and open process the interim board will use for recruiting and hiring the school leader, including:
    - The timeline for developing a job description for the school leader and then recruiting and hiring the school leader;
    - How the board will recruit potential candidates who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability; and
    - Whether the board plans to hire a temporary start-up coordinator and, if so, how this person will be identified.
1. Describe the school’s strategy and process for recruiting and hiring other school employees that are qualified to effectively serve the unique needs of the projected student population.
  2. Describe how the school will provide employees with initial and ongoing orientation and professional development about the mission, vision and outcomes of the school.

**B. School Calendar**

Application contains a calendar and corresponding explanation that reflects the school’s program model, proposed learning program, and transportation plan.

1. Describe the calendar the school plans to use:
  - Identify the unique characteristics of the school’s proposed calendar.



- Describe how this proposed calendar lends itself to the school’s mission and vision.
- Provide total number of teacher contract days.
- Indicate the total number of student instructional days.
- Provide the planned length of the student instructional day (excluding meals).
- Provide a description or outline of a “typical day” at the new school.

**C. Facility Plan**

Describes a plan to secure a suitable facility that meets the unique needs of the school and complies with health and safety and building code requirements.

1. Facility Needs Planning Process:
  - Describe the school’s plan, including the timeline and process, for determining space needs appropriate to the program and enrollment.
  - Describe results of a preliminary facility needs assessment.
2. Facility Selection Process:
  - Describe the school’s plan, including the timeline, process and milestones to be met in locating and evaluating potential facilities and selecting a building for lease that is affordable, provides adequate space and meets all health and safety and public building code requirements.
  - Provide a description of any potential facility or facilities that have been identified.

**D. Transportation Plan:** Describes a plan to provide transportation that meets the needs of the school and complies with Minnesota law.

- Transportation Options:
  - If the school will provide its own transportation, describe the school’s plan, including the timeline, process and milestones to be met in locating and evaluating potential transportation providers.
  - If the resident school district will provide transportation for the school, describe any potential impacts on the school’s learning program and school calendar.
- Transportation Policies:
  - Describe the school’s policy for providing transportation to special populations
  - Describe the school’s policy for providing transportation to students that live outside the resident district.

**VI. THREE YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET**

Instructions:

- Present a three-year operational budget, using the budget simulation provided to reviewers with an understanding of the proposed operational budget needed to guide and control the use of public funds for the benefit of students at the new charter school (see attached).
  - Provide a comprehensive budget narrative that includes assumptions guiding the use of numbers and provides rationales and substantive documentation for the use of those numbers. Note: Federal funds and start-up funds are not included in the budget.
- Include the three-year budget and corresponding narrative in the application.

Evaluative Criteria:

The three-year operational budget will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Qualities of sound financial management are present.
 

Assumptions guiding the budget development process are defensible.

  - Enrollment estimates are based upon sound interest surveys and marketing data.
  - A valid data source for assumptions about student characteristic data is described.
  - Current and historical data assist in shaping revenue and expenditure increases and inflation assumptions.

- Financial management strategies reflect abilities to adapt to changing fiscal conditions.
  - Budget balancing and cost-containment strategies address potential enrollment changes.
  - Costs for technology, capital and supplies are adequately addressed.
  - If the school intends to apply for federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant funds, the financial plan should include contingencies if CSP funds are not awarded.
2. Qualities of a healthy budget are present.
- There is a positive general fund balance in each of the three years.
- The budget for each year increases the general fund balance.
  - A fund balance exists even if inaccuracies are corrected.
  - The budget reflects only general fund items with food and community service attached as being critical to the operation of the school.
  - Enrollment and staffing projections are consistently used throughout all sections of the application.
3. The budget supports a quality school plan.
- The budget contains a justification for each service option listed in the application.
    - The narrative elements of the application are completed for each option.
    - Each option requiring budget data is consistently described throughout the application.
  - Some expenditures support the uniqueness of the school mission.
    - Special curricular expenditures are clearly supported in the narrative.
    - The budget contains unique and realistic staffing patterns.

*SECTION SIX MUST ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF THE SCHOOL IS APPLYING FOR A PRESCHOOL EXPANSION.*

**VI. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS** (Instructional Preschool or Prekindergarten - *if applicable*) Section will be graded Satisfactory, Approaching Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, but not scored.

**VI.A. Comprehensive Child Assessment:** Assessing each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.

- Describe the assessment process used to measure individual child progress in all the prekindergarten and preschool instructional classes that includes the use of a standardized child assessment instrument, such as High Scope Child Observation Record (COR), Teaching Strategies Gold, or Work Sampling System.
  - The assessment must be used at least at program entrance and program exit.
  - At a minimum, the comprehensive assessment should measure children's progress in the domains of language, literacy, and mathematical thinking. Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, social and emotional development, creativity and the arts.
  - The child assessment should be one [approved by Minnesota Parent Aware](#). It must be a valid and reliable child assessment instrument that is developmentally appropriate and comprehensive.
  - The comprehensive child assessment must align with [Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress—Minnesota's Early Learning Standards](#), Revised 2017.
- Describe how the child assessment results are used to inform curricula and instruction throughout the school year.

- Describe how families are involved in the assessment process throughout the year.
- Describe how assessment results are shared between the early learning and kindergarten staff in order to maximize the building of a coherent system between early learning and kindergarten.
- Describe how the child assessment process is responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of children in the school's early learning program.

**VI.B. Intentional Instructional Practice:** Provide intentional instructional practice aligned with [Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress \(ECIPs\) – Minnesota's Early Learning Standards](#) and [Minnesota's Kindergarten Academic Standards](#). Instructional practices must be based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills and development that prepare children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.

- Describe how program content and intentional instructional practices are aligned with Minnesota's ECIPs. The school should consider using a [Minnesota Parent Aware aligned curricula](#).
- Briefly describe the curriculum used in the early learning program, such as High Scope Preschool Curriculum or Opening the World of Learning (OWL).
- Indicate how the ECIPs are incorporated into the program based on the age of children participating in the early learning program.
- Provide an overview of instructional practice to support children's early literacy skills development.
- Describe a balance of child-initiated learning and teacher-directed pedagogies appropriate for young children's development and interests.
- Provide a brief overview of the program's early learning approaches (such as use of project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, learning centers, interactive learning, and play-based learning).

**VI.C. Kindergarten Transition:** Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.

- Briefly describe the program plan for transition to kindergarten that includes meaningful coordination and planning with kindergarten teachers, and engages families in a variety of ways to support children's learning and successful transition to kindergarten. The transition plan should be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families participating in the early learning program and school.
- Describe how the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices between the early learning program and kindergarten program are aligned.
- Describe strategies to engage families in meaningful ways to support their children's learning throughout the transition into the kindergarten year beyond one-time events.
- Describe a plan for providing guidance to families not enrolling their child in the charter school kindergarten program.
- *If a free program*, indicate if the charter school will provide enrollment preference to kindergarten for students participating in the early learning program as allowed by [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.11\(c\)](#).

**VI.D. Community-Based Services:** Coordinate relevant services and programs with community organizations.

- Provide a brief description of how the program coordinates with community organizations and how those resources are shared with families.
  - Coordination may include referrals to community programs based on child needs, such as local public health organizations, social services, mental health services, or other early learning or child care programs.
  - The coordination with community-based services should reflect the needs of the children participating in the early learning program.

- The community-based services utilized should be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families participating in the early learning program and school.
- Describe how information about community-based services can be made available to families using a variety of strategies, such as family advocates, school-home liaisons, parenting educators, social media, and informal school events.

**VI.E Staff Ratios and Licensure:** Ensure staff-child ratios of one-to-ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the staff being supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher.

- Describe how the early learning program is provided and how ratios and group size are provided to ensure a high-quality early learning program.
- For each prekindergarten and preschool instructional class, describe staff licensure area and MN teaching license file folder number and other credentials, as appropriate. If this information is not available at the time of submission, please indicate anticipated staffing licensure areas. MDE may require the school to submit staff licensure areas and MN teaching license folder numbers and other credentials when staff is hired.

**VI.F Teacher Content Knowledge:** Ensure teachers are knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction.

- Describe licensed staff training/professional development specific to early learning curriculum, instructional practices and assessment that has been completed in the past five years. If this information is not available at the time of submission, please indicate anticipated teacher knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction. MDE may require the school to submit evidence of teacher knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction when staff is hired.

**VI.G. Completion of Early Childhood Screening:** Ensure participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under Minnesota Statutes, sections [121A.16](#) to [121A.19](#).

- Provide a description of how and where participating children receive health and developmental screening either through a traditional school district or comparable screening from a health care provider (such as Child and Teen Checkups through local public health organizations) if the charter school is not providing the early childhood health and developmental screening program.

*(Please note: It is not necessary for the charter school to provide early childhood health and developmental screening but must describe how children receive the comprehensive health and developmental screening to identify possible problems that may interfere with children's learning.)*

- Provide a plan for those children who do not successfully complete early childhood screening including how referrals will be made.

**VI.H. Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (if applicable)**

Describe the school's plan and capacity to provide the early childhood screening program in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, sections [121A.16](#) to [121A.19](#) and Minnesota Rules [3530.3000](#), [3530.3300](#), and [3530.3400](#).

- In discussing the school's plan and capacity to provide an early childhood screening program, describe how the school will meet MDE accountability requirements for data submission in accordance with [Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.17](#). This includes the establishment of the MARSS Preschool Screening (PS) Record and the annual data submission to MDE Early Learning Services for children receiving the early childhood

screening program directly from the school or through a contracted service provider with a comparable screening program, such as a local public health organization.

**VII. APPLICATION INTERVIEW PROCESS** – Occurs after the application desk review.

**VIII. FOUNDERS RESUMES** - Attach a **current** (brief) résumé for each person identified on the Founder Contact List to the application.

**The application as a whole and each section will be judged based on the following scale:**

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 95/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 95 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

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A. School Founders	

B. Governance	
<b>V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>20 pts</b>
A. Marketing, Outreach, Enrollment and Admissions.	
B. School Management and Staffing Plans	
C. School Calendar	
D. Facility Plan	
E. Transportation Plan	
<b>VI. SCHOOL PREOPERATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BUDGET</b>	<b>10 pts</b>
<b>VI. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM</b>	<i>Not scored</i>
<b>VIII. APPLICANT INTERVIEW</b>	<b>20 pts</b>
<b>Preference Points</b>	
<b>Grassroots Community Ties (5 pts)</b>	
<b>School Replication (5 pts)</b>	
<b>K-12 (5 pts)</b>	
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>100-115</b>

<b>Application Preference:</b> (check “yes” or “no”)	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
Applicant has board members with grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.		5 pts	
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model and board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.		5 pts	
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.		5 pts	

### **THREE YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET SPREADSHEET**

The budget spreadsheet has several areas that are pre-coded to formulas. Little needs to be done with those cells that are noted as blocked. Those areas will be explained in the pre-application meeting.

General revenue estimates are using the current fiscal year levels issued by the legislature. The task of the budget builder is to simply provide the number of students in particular levels (elementary or secondary) as well as characteristics of students who may be eligible for free or reduced lunch or who need an English Learner program.

Local revenues including grants and donations are not to be placed in the budget. If they are placed in the budget, they must be off-set by an equal number of expenditures so that the budget is not artificially inflated.

Complete all needed expenditure categories. If the expenditures are not covered by any start-up funds, those expenditures (technology, equipment and supplies) must be included in the three-year budget. This should be completely explained in the narrative section of the budget.

Special education expenditures are assumed for the sake of brevity in the budget. Special education revenues are figured at 95% of those expenditures. You need to calculate the special education director costs.

Formulas are already set to calculate lease aid revenue after you provide the lease expenditure.

The lunch program assumes a 10% loss and a transfer for that loss is built into the general fund.

Note that the budget must balance and show growth for the three years. Any year that shows a negative balance will disqualify the application.

Note: Applicant should use the MDE “what-if” budget model available at:

<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=44>

## COVER SHEET

### VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION

<b>Proposed Name of New Charter Public School</b>	
<b>Contact Information</b> (School mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)	
<b>Name of Primary Contact</b>	<b>Primary Contact Information</b> (If different from above) (Mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)
<b>Grade Levels Served When Fully Enrolled</b>	<b>Number of Students When Fully Enrolled</b>
<b>Proposed Opening Date</b>	<b>Where Will the School be Located?</b>
<b>Is this charter public school a conversion of an existing district public school (see Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, subd.6)?</b> If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation. <i>A conversion request is considered only with evidence of both:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A petition from at least 60% of a school’s full-time teachers seeking conversion; and</li> <li>- Approved public school district board minutes recognizing the petition.</li> </ul>	Yes No
<b>Is this charter public school an expansion of an existing education program in any form (public, private, or otherwise)?</b> If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation.	Yes No
<b>Is this charter public school planning to offer any online coursework?</b>	Yes No
<b>Has the new charter public school been approved by the State of Minnesota as a nonprofit corporation or cooperative?</b> If no, provide a specific date by which the new charter public school plans to be approved as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation or cooperative.	Yes No  Date:



## FOUNDER CONTACT SHEET

### VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION

**Provide information for ALL individuals directly involved in the development of this new charter public school including founders, board members, developers, grant writers, and consultants. Type all information in the form fields below.**

NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL ADDRESS & POSTAL ADDRESS	DEVELOPER ROLE (board member, consultant, etc.)	Minnesota Teacher License File Folder Number (if applicable)

**Important Notes:**

- Minn. Stat. § 124E.07, Subd.3a stipulates that: *The ongoing charter school board of directors shall have at least five nonrelated members.*
- Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, Subd.1a stipulates that: *An authorizer, after receiving an application from a charter school developer, may charter either a licensed teacher under section 122A.18, subd.1, or a group of individuals that includes one or more licensed teachers under section 122A.18, subd.1, to operate a charter school subject to the commissioner’s approval of the authorizer’s affidavit under subdivision 4.*
- Must have a minimum of FIVE interim board members to be considered for review of your application.
- Check accuracy of all contact information provided.
- Do not include people who only consulted in the development of the application. Include only **primary** founders and developers.

## Letter of Intent Evaluation Rubric

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: Incomplete letters will not be reviewed. Candidates must receive a minimum score of 20/22. A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for an invitation to apply.*

**HIGH QUALITY SCHOOL REPLICATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Criteria	Points	Satisfactory	Approaching Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Comments:
Information contains the proposed name of the school and grades to be served (must include at least six grades K- 12 and not be a stand-alone middle school).	Required, but not scored				
Information includes the enrollment targets by grade for the initial 5 years.	(0-2 possible)				
Information includes the anticipated year the developers would like the school to open.	Required, but not scored				
Information includes the proposed location of the school <b>with</b> justification for that location.	(0-4 possible)				
Information includes the names of a founding board - a minimum of five members, that is intentionally diverse, and has strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location of school development. Directory information is included for each member. <i>The majority of founding</i>	(0-4 possible)				

<i>board members live in the proposed geographic location and include at least one MN licensed teacher and one parent residing in the proposed school geographic service area.</i>					
Information includes a brief explanation of how the school would be intentionally diverse and not cater to one or two ethnic groups.	(0-4 possible)				
Information includes program highlights, learning philosophy and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the target geographic location.	(0-4 possible)				
Information explains why the developers are interested in VOA-MN as an authorizer and brief plan to incorporate service-learning (mission-fit).	(0-4 possible)				
The developers have disclosed if a consulting firm is participating in the development of the proposed charter school in any way and potential conflict of interests must be identified and addressed.	Required, but not scored				
The developers have disclosed if a charter management organization or an educational management organization is participating in the development of the proposed charter school and include any contracts/agreements.	Required, but not scored				
The letter of intent is no more than six pages.	Required, but not scored				
<b>OVERALL RATING / SCORE</b>					



## New Charter School Application Review Rubric

**Applicant Name:**

**Peer Reviewer Name:**

**Rating Scale:**

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 95/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 95 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

<b>Application Preference Points (bonus points):</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
Applicants has board members that have grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.		5 pts	
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model <u>and</u> there is board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.		5 pts	
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.		5 pts	

<b>Part I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)</b>	
<i>Provides a one-page, single-spaced overview of the school that is planned. Includes, program highlights/learning philosophy, grade levels to be served, anticipated location, and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the community in which the school will be located.</i>	
Rating (mark with an “X”)	<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	
<b>Part II – FOUNDATION (10 pts)</b>	
<b>II.A. SCHOOL VISION AND MISSION. (not scored)</b>	

*A high-quality application should provide a clearly articulated vision and mission statements that reflect the school's purpose, program model and goals.*

*Vision: statement outlines what the school wants to be (something to be pursued).*

*Mission: statement outlines what the school is now (something to be accomplished).*

<i>Rating (mark with an "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		

**II.B. NEED AND DEMAND. (5 pts.)**

*A high-quality application presents a clear, compelling reason for establishing the new charter school, including strategies or evidence of demand - how they will meet enrollment targets. Identifies proof of community support for an additional school in this area; Identify the nearby district, charter or private schools and the education programs already offered; Includes a market analysis to justify the need). Addresses how they plan to fulfill the primary purpose of a charter school, "to increase all student learning and all student achievement.*

<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory (5 pts)</b>		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</b>		

**II. C. PURPOSE (5 pts)**

*Application explains how the new charter school will meet the state statutory primary purpose of a charter school. Based on the need identified, the application describes the new and unique characteristics this school will provide to students that distinguish it from other education options available to students; describes how the proposed school will meet the primary statutory purpose of a charter school, "to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement," identifies one or more of the additional five statutory purposes for charter schools the school intends to meet (see Minn. Stat. 124E.01, Subd.1), and provides a comprehensive explanation of how the school will meet those additional purposes with alignment to mission and vision.*

<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory (5 pts)</b>		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</b>		

**III. LEARNING PROGRAM (25 pts)**

*Presents a high-quality educational program with accountability for student achievement.*

**III.A. Educational Philosophy, Curricula, Tools, Methods & Instructional Techniques (5 pts)**

*(The schools plan for meeting or exceeding the outcome expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students - World's Best Workforce goals)*

<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory (5 pts)</b>		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</b>		

**III.B. Plan for Serving Special Education Students (5 pts)**

<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory (5 pts)</b>		

<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>III.C. Students with Limited English Proficiency (5 pts)</b>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>III.D. Assessment and Accountability Plan (5 pts)</b>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>III.E. Alignment with VOA-MN Authorizing Program Mission, Vision, and Service Learning (5 pts)</b>		
<i>Rating (assign score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPERS (15 pts)</b>		
<b>IV.A. SCHOOL FOUNDERS (5 pts)</b>		
<i>Application includes the primary school founders and how they are well-positioned to develop and plan a new high-quality charter school.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>IV.B. GOVERNANCE (10 pts)</b>		
<i>Application describes a plan to ensure effective, accountable and representative governance over the school's operations.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (20 pts)</b>		
<b>V.A. MARKETING, OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS and ENROLLMENT PROCESS (10 pts)</b>		
<i>Describes a marketing &amp; outreach plan, based on compelling need and grassroots efforts to ensure open access to all students and achievement of enrollment targets.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)</i>		
<b>V.B. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING PLANS (10 pts)</b>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>

<i>Satisfactory</i> (9-10 pts.)		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory</i> (8 pts.)		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i> (0 pts.)		
<b>V.C. SCHOOL CALENDAR (not scored)</b>		
<i>Application contains a calendar that reflects the school's program model, proposed learning program, and transportation plan.</i>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>V.D. FACILITY PLAN</b>		
<i>Application describes a plan to secure a suitable facility that meets the unique needs of the school and complies with health, safety, and building code requirements.</i>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>V.E. TRANSPORTATION PLAN (not scored)</b>		
<i>Application describes a plan to provide transportation that meets the needs of the school (program model and calendar) and complies with Minnesota statute.</i>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI. THREE YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET (10 pts)</b>		
<i>The budget provides reasonable funding projections, accurate calculations and aligns to the other sections of the charter school application.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i> (9-10 pts)		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory</i> (8 pts)		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i> (0 pts)		
<b>Part VI: EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS (not scored)</b>		
<i>Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs. These sections are graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but not scored.</i>		
<b>VI.A. The application explains the school's plan for a comprehensive child assessment.</b>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.B. – The application explains the school's plan for intentional instructional practices.</b>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.C. The application describes the school's plan for coordinating an appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.</b>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.D. The application provides an explanation of the existing and/or proposed staffing plan.</b>		

Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.E. Community Based Services:</b> <i>The application describes how the program coordinates with community organizations and how those resources are shared with families. The application also describes how information about community-based services can be made available to families using a variety of strategies, such as family advocates, school-home liaisons, parenting educators, social media, and informal school events.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.E. Staff Ratios and Licensure:</b> <i>The application provides an explanation of teacher qualifications and professional development. Application includes anticipated staffing licensure areas.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.F. Teacher Content Knowledge:</b> <i>The application contains a plan to ensure teachers are knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction. Applicants explain their expectations for teacher qualifications including required level of knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.G. Completion of Early Childhood Screening:</b> <i>The application describes the school's plan for early childhood screening.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.H. Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (if applicable):</b> <i>The applicant describes the school's plan and capacity to provide the early childhood screening program in accordance with Minnesota Statutes.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VII: APPLICANT INTERVIEW (20 pts.)</b> <i>Applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their expansion application. Individuals participating in the interview are able to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the proposed expansion of the school.</i>		
Rating (insert score)		



<i>Satisfactory (19-20 pts)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (17-18 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>Base Points</b>	<i>/100</i>	
<b>Preference Points</b>	<i>/</i>	
<b>Final Score</b>	<i>/ 100-115</i>	

**Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approve**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approve**