

Charter School Development and Application Checklist

Step 1: Exploration (3-6 months)

- Investigate Mississippi's charter law, charter policies, and available funding and resources.
- Review Mississippi's charter school authorizing process.
- Conduct research on charter schools, school models, and school design.
- Identify eligible districts and assess community and student needs.
- Research district performance and steps taken to improve student achievement.
- Visit charter schools in Mississippi and/or other states.
- Review successful charter applications from previous application cycles.

Step 2: Initial Design (3-6 months)

- Form a core school design team.
- Articulate an initial vision for the charter school.
- Engage the community.
- Develop clear vision and mission statements.
- Create a plan for how the design team will address major design areas.
- Write a basic description (or blueprint) of the charter school to share with others.
- Identify a possible school facility.
- Identify dates to apply for charter school start-up funding and other grants and begin to raise additional funds if needed.
- File Articles of Incorporation and apply for 501(c)3 non-profit status.

Step 3: Major Design (6-12 months)

- Write the educational program.
- Devise a school culture and climate strategy.
- Create a parent and community engagement strategy.
- Create a school governance structure.
- Identify school staffing needs.

- Create a school budget and identify financial needs.
- Devise facilities and operations plans.
- Write a school accountability plan.
- Address other application requirements, including plans for liability and insurance coverage, transportation, etc.

Step 4: Applying for the Charter

- Draft the charter application.
- Ensure all questions are addressed fully.
- Review, review and then review again.
- Submit the completed charter school proposal to the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board.