

Understanding CSP Grant Project Goals

Welcome and Introductions

- Presenter introduction
- Purpose of session: Understanding CSP grant project goals to strengthen applications

Overview of Great Schools Colorado (GSC) CSP Grant Program

- Background of federal Charter Schools Program (CSP)
- Colorado's 5-year \$68M award (2024–2029)
- Primary program objectives:
 - Expand the number of high-quality charter schools
 - Raise outcomes, especially for educationally disadvantaged students
 - Strengthen authorizer and school capacity, oversight, and accountability

Subgrant Project Goals

- Alignment with CSP federal priorities (ESSA Title IV, Part C)
- For all applicants (new, replicating, expanding, or continuation):
 - Clear, measurable goals tied to:
 - Student academic achievement and growth
 - Serving educationally disadvantaged or at-risk students
 - Implementing a high-quality, research-based educational model
 - Strengthening governance, leadership, and management capacity

- SMART goal requirements (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)
- Integration of project goals into budget narrative and implementation plan

Examples of Strong Grant Project Goals

- Example 1: Increasing enrollment and retention of underserved student populations by 20% over two years
- Example 2: Improving 3-year student academic growth scores to exceed district averages by 10%
- Example 3: Expanding professional development hours aligned to national standards, resulting in 90% of teachers trained on new curriculum
- Example 4: Strengthening board capacity through completion of governance training modules with 100% board participation

Linking Goals to Funding and Allowable Uses

- Allowable costs tied directly to project goals, including:
 - Staff hiring and compensation (during planning phase)
 - Professional development
 - Instructional materials and aligned curriculum
 - Minor facility repairs (non-construction)
 - Community engagement, recruitment, and outreach
 - Technology and equipment
- Emphasis on **non-sustaining**, startup, or capacity-building activities (not ongoing operational costs)
- Ensuring each budget line directly supports a project goal

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

- Writing vague or immeasurable goals
- Proposing activities not aligned with CSP priorities
- Overlapping or duplicating previously funded activities (especially for prior recipients)
- Failing to address educationally disadvantaged students or equity gaps

Final Takeaways and Q&A

- Importance of clear, ambitious but realistic project goals
- Resources and technical assistance available
- Encouragement to attend technical workshops and use application checklists