



Start·a·School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Arizona

Charter Schools

The Arizona Charter Schools Program ensures high-quality educational choices by selecting, monitoring, and assisting transformative leaders.

The state board of education and state-approved charter authorizers are required to develop standards for the approval of online course providers and online schools based on itemized criteria.

Citations: [Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 15-808](#)

Steps to Start a Charter School

Arizona State Board of Charter Schools (ASBCS)

The ASBCS conducts an annual cycle for new charter applications. The New Charter Application for schools opening is approved annually by the ASBCS. An example of the timeline for the application cycle is found below for schools opening in Fall 2025.

The first step in creating a Charter school is to register as a corporation. This is usually a non-profit LLC. The Corporations Division of the Arizona Corporation Commission approves for filing all articles of incorporation for Arizona business and all articles of organization for limited liability companies, as well as grants authority to foreign corporations to transact business in Arizona. The Division also collects from every corporation an annual report which reflects its current status, business, and financial condition. For more information on the different types of entities and associated filing requirements, visit the [Arizona Corporation Commission's website](#).

If you are planning to operate as a non-profit, you will need to obtain your IRS Non-Profit status by submitting [IRS Form 1023](#).

Sample Timeline of Application Cycle:

Key Steps	Month
Applicant Workshops	Late February - March
Letter of Intent Due	March 22, 2024
Application Due	May 20, 2024
Soft deadline date	April 14, 2024
Applicant Capacity Interview	October 2024
ASBCS Consideration	December 2024 Board Meeting

Arizona Application Process

1. Create a Board and Policies.
2. Obtain your IRS Non-Profit status by submitting [IRS Form 1023](#).
3. [Attend a workshop](#): Board staff will present virtual training for applicants during the application cycle. Training will focus on clarification of the instructions and process, and to identify common pitfalls for applicants.
4. Review the [Application Instructions](#)
5. Complete information for each application component, ensuring the information is consistent with the contents of the application package. This includes:
 - 5.1. Application Agreement
 - 5.2. Applicant Information Form
 - 5.3. Target Population Form
6. All narrative sections, required exhibits, and forms;
7. All necessary information for completing a Background, Fingerprint, and Credit Check report for each Authorized Representative and Principal (see Terms to Know) to include:
 - 7.1. Authorized Representative and/or Charter Principal Information Form.
 - 7.2. Fingerprint Clearance Card: A copy of both sides of a valid FCC, issued by the Arizona Department of Public Safety.
 - 7.3. Affidavit: The Affidavit, Disclosure, and Consent for Background and Credit Check form must be completely and accurately filled out, signed, and notarized.
 - 7.4. Background Information Sheet: The Background Information Sheet must be completely and accurately filled out.
 - 7.5. Resume: A current resume (2-page maximum) is required.
 - 7.6. Verification of Coursework/Degree: If a postsecondary degree is noted on the Background Information Sheet and Resume, the Applicant must provide scanned copies of transcripts from the granting institution, or an official, watermarked, report from the National Student Clearinghouse® (<https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/>). These documents must be uploaded with the application package. Copies of diplomas do not meet this requirement.
 - 7.7. Confirmed availability of start-up funds as listed in the application package and the completed Verifiable Proof of Secured Funds (“VPSF”) form;
 - 7.8. Instructional Analysis documents submitted on the approved template, identifying the Required Standard, and following the criteria for administrative completeness found in section A.6 Instructional Analysis.

7.9. Required documents completely filled out and submitted on the form or template approved for the current application cycle.

By March 31 of each year, the Board approves and makes available online at its website an application for a new charter for a specified fiscal year. For example, on February 12, 2024, the Board approved the application for a new charter for the 2025-2026 application cycle, which includes templates and forms designated by the Board. Templates and forms must not be altered from the approved content, format, and sequence. An application package submitted for a new charter is not administratively complete if it contains modifications to the content, format, or sequence of the templates or forms or if it contains templates or forms that were approved for use in a prior fiscal year.

Statutes and Rules

- [Section 15-211 K-3 reading program; dyslexia specialist; dyslexia training; receipt and use of monies; additional funding; annual report](#)
- [Section 15-213 Procurement practices of school districts and charter schools; violations; classification; definitions](#)
- [Section 15-213.02 Program for school energy and water use efficiency programs; definitions](#)
- [Section 15-215 Petition process for regulatory exemptions; annual report](#)
- [Section 15-216 Arizona critical language and economic development pilot program; rules; program termination; definition](#)
- [Section 15-218 Suicide awareness and prevention training; child abuse and sexual abuse prevention and training; continuing education](#)
- [Section 15-219 Dyslexia and reading impairment screening, intervention, accommodation and technology; continuing education; rules; training](#)
- [Section 15-239 School compliance and recognition; accreditation; audits](#)
- [Section 15-241 School, charter school and school district accountability; annual achievement profiles; classification; letter grade system; profiles; appeals process; failing schools tutoring fund; definition](#)
- [Section 15-241.02 School improvement plans; solutions teams; withholding of state monies](#)
- [Section 15-242 Nutrition standards](#)
- [Section 15-245 Mandatory reporting training; materials](#)

- [Section 15-249.01 Data governance commission; membership; terms; duties; commission termination](#)
- [Section 15-249.03 Best practice examples of reading intervention and remedial reading strategies; posting](#)
- [Section 15-249.06 College credit by examination incentive program; incentive bonuses; report; college credit by examination development fund](#)
- [Section 15-249.08 Results-based funding fund; distributions; requirements; reports](#)
- [Section 15-249.09 Early literacy program fund; report; definitions](#)
- [Section 15-249.10 Dyslexia handbook](#)
- [Section 15-249.11 Rural STEM program fund; definition](#)
- [Section 15-249.12 Computer science professional development program fund; requirements; uses; reports](#)
- [Section 15-249.13 Definition of "rural" for purpose of federal funding eligibility](#)
- [Section 15-249.14 Department of education; kindergarten survey; reading proficiency](#)
- [Section 15-249.15 Arizona industry credentials incentive program; distributions; report; fund](#)
- [Section 15-249.16 Statutory handbook of parental rights; posting](#)
- [Section 15-251 Powers and duties](#)
- [Section 15-252 Powers and duties; publications; payment of claims for printing](#)
- [Section 15-253 Legal opinions relating to school matters](#)
- [Section 15-255 Annual report; contents; definition](#)
- [Section 15-256 Waivers; federal education flexibility partnership act](#)
- [Section 15-257 Employee evaluation system](#)
- [Section 15-258 State seal of biliteracy program; requirements; diploma](#)
- [Section 15-259 State seal of civics literacy program; requirements; diploma](#)
- [Section 15-260 State seal of personal finance proficiency program; requirements; diploma](#)
- [Section 15-261 State seal of arts proficiency program; requirements; diploma](#)
- [Section 15-271 Duties of auditor general for uniform financial records system; reporting requirements](#)

Resources

- [New Charter Application Instructions](#)
- [New Charter Application Instructions for Applicants with an Arizona Online Instruction Program](#)
- [Section 15-272 Duties of department of education for uniform system of financial records](#)