



Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Colorado

Charter Schools

Virtual Charters

State law defines an "**online pupil**" as a child who receives educational services predominantly through a multi-district online school. The state charter school institute may authorize a multi-district online school but is first required to apply to the online division within the Department of Education for certification of such a school.

Colorado Revised Statutes can be researched at this [link](#).

Citations: [Colo Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-30.5-103\(6\)](#); [Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-30.7-101](#); [Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-30.7-106](#); [Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-30.7-103](#)

Steps to Start a Charter School

The first step in creating a Charter school is to register as a corporation. This is usually a non-profit LLC. Register with your state's Division of Corporations.

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](#).

Review the [Colorado Charter School Handbook](#).

Review New Applicant Information at [Colorado Charter School Institute](#).

Example of New School Application Timelines

Prospective applicants should attend a CSI orientation 2-6 months prior to submitting a Letter of Intent.

Activity	Summer/Fall Cycle	Spring Cycle
Application Orientation	Prior to Letter of Intent	Prior to Letter of Intent
Letter of Intent Due	June 24, 2024	February 24, 2025

Activity	Summer/Fall Cycle	Spring Cycle
Application Due	July 29, 2024	March 24, 2025
Applicant Community Meeting	TBD by Applicant in August or September	TBD by Applicant in April or May
Applicant Presentation to CSI Board's PM Committee	September Committee Meeting	April Committee Meeting
Applicant Interview with CSI Review Team	TBD in August or September	TBD in April or May
CSI Board's PM Committee of Recommendation	October Committee Meeting	June Committee Meeting
CSI Board Action	October Board Meeting	June Board Meeting

Review [District and Authorizer Information](#).

Colorado charter schools are public schools that operate by way of a contract (charter) that has been authorized by a local school district or the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI). The following links provide more information about Colorado school districts and charter school authorizers.

General Information

- Charter School Institute (CSI) - Authorized to accept applications for schools (1) in districts without exclusive chartering authority (ECA) and (2) in districts which have retained ECA, with permission to the applicant from the district's board of education. Click on the link to be directed to the CSI Web site.
- [Exclusive Chartering Authority \(ECA\)](#) - includes a list of Colorado districts with/without ECA.
- [Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers \(CACSA\)](#) - CACSA was formed by and serves the professional staff in Colorado authorizers who work on all tasks associated with charter school oversight. These education leaders created CACSA to support all of Colorado's authorizers, with the goals of improving charter school authoring practices, the quality of charter schools, and the education for all students in the state.

Application Templates

Standard Application Template and Evaluation Standards (2021):

This application has been developed in collaboration with the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA), the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS), and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The application is intended to assist authorizers with creating rigorous charter review processes that also incorporate spaces for local priorities. Furthermore, it is designed to assist charter school founders of various backgrounds with developing proposals that meet community needs. This application is aligned with the Colorado Charter School Program (CCSP) grant to allow opportunities for schools to address eligibility criteria and requirements that are part of the grant application at the same time they are working on a charter application for the authorizer.

- [Standard Application & Evaluation Standards 2021](#)
- [Standard Application Rubric 2021](#)

Sample Contract Template (2021 - CACSA)

As part of a national dissemination grant from the United States Department of Education, the Colorado Charter School Institute and the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers was selected to develop a range of high-quality charter authorizer documents - some of which are state specific. One such document is an updated model contract for Colorado. That document is available here:

- [Sample Contract Language and Attachments](#) (as published by the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers)
- [Editable Version](#) (as published by the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers)

Statutes and Rules

Article 30.5 Charter Schools

- [Part 1. Charter Schools Act \(§§ 22-30.5-101 — 22-30.5-120\)](#)
- [Part 2. Charter School Districts \(Repealed\)](#)
- [Part 3. Independent Charter Schools \(§§ 22-30.5-301 — 22-30.5-308\)](#)
- [Part 4. Charter School Capital Facilities Financing Act \(§§ 22-30.5-401 — 22-30.5-409\)](#)
- [Part 5. Institute Charter Schools \(§§ 22-30.5-501 — 22-30.5-530\)](#)
- [Part 6. Charter School Collaboratives \(§§ 22-30.5-601 — 22-30.5-605\)](#)
- [Part 7. Emergency Powers \(§§ 22-30.5-701 — 22-30.5-704\)](#)

Resources

- [Topic Based Webinars](#)
- [Board Training Modules](#)
- [Policy Guidance Charter School Network Audits](#)
- [Charter School Support Initiative \(CSSI\)](#)
- [Weighted Lottery Policy Factsheet \(PDF\)](#)

- [Capital Construction](#)
- [Charter Schools and Special Education](#)
- [Charter School Procedures - Colorado State Board of Education](#)
- [Policy Guidance Charter Schools and CORA and Open Meetings Law \(PDF\)](#)