



Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

North Carolina

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools of choice that are authorized by the State Board of Education and operated by independent non-profit boards of directors. State and local tax dollars are the primary funding sources for charter schools, which have open enrollment and cannot discriminate in admissions, associate with any religion or religious group, or charge tuition.

Charter schools operate with freedom from many of the regulations that govern district schools, but charter schools are held accountable through the state assessment and accountability system.

More information can be found at the [North Carolina Association for Public Charter Schools](#).

Steps to Opening a Charter School

The 2024 North Carolina Charter School Application window closed on April 26, 2024, at 5 pm Eastern. Applicant boards were expected to appear in-person for interviews at the Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, NC that commenced during the monthly meetings of the Charter Schools Review Board meeting beginning September 2024. For questions about the charter application process, please reach out to Melanie.Rackley@dpi.nc.gov.

[North Carolina Charter Applications](#)

Instructions for applicants:

1. The main applicant user should initiate a new application.
 - 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.
 - Create a Board and Policies
 - Obtain your IRS Non-Profit status by submitting [IRS Form 1023](#).
 - Each applicant team should designate one person as their "main applicant" who will be the one to initiate (and eventually submit) the application.
 - Whoever initiates the application is the *only* user who can submit the application.

- Only one person should do this and only once because each time it's done, a new application will be started (i.e. doing this more than once will start redundant applications).
 - On future visits, there will be a link to continue this application on the user's EdLusion home page (after submission or deadline that link will go away).
 - Other applicant users (collaborators) should wait until the main applicant user has added them as a collaborator.
 1. They will get an email notification when that happens.
 2. After that, they will have a link to collaborate on the application on their EdLusion home page (after submission or deadline that link will disappear).
- [To initiate a new application](#)
 - If you are already an Epicenter user, use the “Sign in with Epicenter” option.
 - If you are not an Epicenter user, you might need to register yourself as a new user.
- 2. Continue the application.
 - [To continue an in-progress application](#)
- 3. For further instructions, please watch the [Applicant Training Video](#).
 - If you have any questions, please consult the [Applicant FAQ](#).
 - If you still have questions, please reach out to Melanie.Rackley@dpi.nc.gov.

Applying to open and operate a public charter school is a multiple-step process.

Sample 2024 Charter Application Timeline

- January 26, 2024: 2024 Application accessible to new applicant groups
- April 26, 2024: All Online Applications Are Due
- January 2025: CSRB continues any second-round interviews, if necessary.

Application Resources

- [2024 charter application timeline.](#)
- [Charter Application Resource Manual](#)
- [Local Allotments 2023-24](#)
- [2024 Budget Template](#) (Revised 2/7/2024)
- [Revised Charter Agreement](#)
- [2024 Application Fee Payment Form](#) (Please use a certified check to pay the \$1,000 fee.)

Statutes and Rules

- [Article 14A Charter Schools](#)
- [§ 115C Purpose of charter schools; role of State Board of Education; establishment of North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board and North Carolina Office of Charter Schools.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.1. Eligible applicants; contents of applications; submission of applications for approval.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.2. Opportunity to correct applications; opportunity to address Review Board.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.3. Fast-track replication of high-quality charter schools.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.5. Final approval of applications for charter schools.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.6. Review and renewal of charters.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.7. Material revisions of charters.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.8. Nonmaterial revisions of charters.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.9. Appeals to the State Board of Education.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.10. Charter school exemptions.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.15. Charter school operation.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.20. Civil liability and insurance requirements.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.25. Open meetings and public records.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.30. Accountability; reporting requirements to State Board of Education.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.35. Charter school facilities.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.37. Public approval for private activity bonds.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.40. Charter school transportation.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.42. Charter School Transportation Grant Program.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.45. Admission requirements.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.50. Charter school nonsectarian.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.55. Nondiscrimination in charter schools.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.60. Student discipline.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.65. North Carolina School Report Cards.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.70. Driving eligibility certificates.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.75. General operating requirements.](#)

- [§ 115C-218.80. Display of the United States and North Carolina flags and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.85. Course of study requirements.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.90. Employment requirements.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.94. Identification of low-performing and continually low-performing charter schools.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.95. Causes for nonrenewal or termination; disputes.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.100. Dissolution of a charter school.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.105. State and local funds for a charter school.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.110. Notice of the charter school process; review of charter schools.](#)
- [§ 115C-218.115. Operation of NC Pre-K programs.](#)

Other Statutes

- [§ 115C-301. Allocation of teachers; class size.](#)

Resources

- [New School Task List](#)
- [RTO Framework](#)
- [Charter School Closure Framework](#)