

Charter Policy Issue Brief

State charter school facility grant programs



This document examines state policies that have established state charter school facility grant programs, effectively helping to defray the amount of operating dollars charter schools spend on their facilities costs.

This document is divided into two sections. The first one focuses on a table that presents a variety of details about each state's policies for state charter school facility grant programs. The second section showcases promising strategies from one state.

Section I: State policies for state charter school facility grant programs

As of this writing, 14 states and the District of Columbia have enacted policies for state charter school facility grant programs. The table below presents a variety of various details about each state's policies for per-pupil charter facilities funding. The states are listed in order of the average grant amount awarded to charter schools by each state, from largest to smallest. There is a text box after the table that provides more information about what each column of the table represents.

State	Average grant amount awarded to date	Total amount awarded to date	Number of grants awarded to date	Maximum grant amount	Initial funding level	Source of funding	Amount of funding still available	Consistent funding ¹	Most recent year with awards given	Funding targeted or generally available
Ohio	\$1,667,922	\$31,690,511	19	50% of project	\$17,010,826	State	\$0	N	2022	Targeted (academics)
District of Columbia ²	\$253,868	\$17,263,050	68	–	Unsure	Federal	\$0	N	2021	General
Tennessee	\$191,094	\$73,454,528	504	–	\$3,300,000	State	\$0	N	2023	Targeted (academics)
Delaware	\$185,625	\$1,485,000	8	–	\$1,485,000	Private	\$0	N	2014	Targeted (academics)
New York	\$175,055	\$15,579,894	89	\$200,000	\$640,431	State	Annual appropriation	Y	2023	Targeted (located in private space)

1. Y = yes (green); N = no (orange); NF = never funded (yellow).
2. The number of grants awarded to date is a low estimate – we could not find detailed data for each year of awards.
3. Tennessee moved the funding for this competitive facility grant program to become a component of the state's funding formula for charter schools starting in 2023-24, where every school will receive a portion of the funding (\$22 million for the first school year).
4. This Georgia program was originally a competitive grant program until the funding level was enough for all charter schools to receive \$100,000 annually. This program will no longer be competitive because there is finally enough funding for each school. The total number of schools is a low estimate because detailed data was not available for every award year.
5. Oklahoma's data was an estimate based on interviews with people in the state.
6. This is a new grant program that was funded for 2023-24 only (Charter School Capital Grants). According to sources, this program has not been funded for any other year.
7. This Georgia program is a matching funds facilities grant program.
8. This was Indiana's Charter School Facilities Assistance Program — money was appropriated in 2012 and 2013, but it appears that it was never actually funded and no additional information can be found.

State policies for state charter school facility grant programs table column descriptions

Average grant amount awarded to date: The average grant amount awarded to schools in the state. This amount is not a school average because some schools may have received multiple grants over the years and that information is not always available. Therefore, the total amount provided is divided by the number of grants provided to determine the average grant size.

Total amount awarded to date: The total amount of money awarded to charter schools through the state's grant program for as many years as there is data available.

Number of grants awarded to date: The total number of grants awarded. In some cases, this number may be an estimate if complete data is not provided for certain years.

Maximum grant amount: The maximum allowed grant amount each year specified either in statute or application materials developed by the program administrator.

Initial funding level: The total funding provided in the first year of the program.

Source of funding: Where the funding for the program originated: the state, the federal government, or the private sector.

Amount of funding still available: Some states provide a large lump sum of money for grant programs and then make awards from that pot of money over multiple years (e.g., California funds their program through statewide bonds every few years and then makes awards for several years afterward). This amount provides an estimate of how much of that grant funding is still available.

Consistent funding: Some states consistently provide funding for their grant programs every year. Other states provide funding on a periodic and inconsistent basis. In still other cases, states have not funded the program.

Most recent year with awards given: This column shows the last award date for the program.

Funding targeted or generally available: Different programs are set up for various reasons. The program could be just a general facilities-related grant or it could be targeted for certain types of schools (e.g., high-performers, start-ups) or it could be aimed at those schools with specific needs (e.g., lease reimbursement).

Section II: Promising Strategies

Georgia's charter school facilities grant program has evolved over the years. In 2004, the original intention of the grant program was to create a needs-based facilities aid grant program. Over the life of the program, the number of awardees fluctuated. In 2017, the General Assembly decided to adjust the intention of this grant program to be more comparable to the facility funding traditional public schools receive. The grant program would change to be non-competitive once sufficient funds were appropriated for all charter schools to receive a meaningful amount (ideally \$100,000). For this reason, the program did not shift to become non-competitive until 2020, when charter schools received \$40,000 per school. 2023–24 will be the first school year where funding levels are high enough for every charter school to receive \$100,000 to use toward facility needs.