

Prospectus Guidance

All new school applicants begin the process by submitting a prospectus. This “executive summary” describes the basic elements of the applicant’s plan for establishing a charter school.

Prospectus Content

A thorough prospectus addresses the following:

- The school’s mission
- The school’s location and targeted student population
- The number of students the school plans to serve in the first year and when it is at full enrollment, the grades served, and the anticipated opening date
- The school design:
 - If a replication of an existing model, include links to websites and performance data along with contact information for existing school(s)
- A day in the life of the school for students, staff, parents, etc.
- Expected academic, operational, financial outcomes
- Evidence for, or explanation of, how the school design can produce those outcomes
- The school’s innovation
- The founding team:
 - List of 501(c)(3) board members and any identified staff
 - A description of the capacity to open and operate the school
- Plans to secure a facility for the school
- A cash flow statement for the period from application to opening.
- Resumes, vitas, and/or any other relevant information regarding the school’s founding board and any identified staff. These pages do NOT count towards the five-page maximum.

Prospectus Format

The prospectus should conform to the following:

- Maximum five (5) pages
- Submitted electronically via email as a PDF to Bill Mendelsohn - mendelsohnb@umsl.edu
- All pages numbered
- One-inch margins on all sides
- Minimum 11-point font
- Times New Roman or Cambria font
- All spelling and grammar correct
- Spacing standard single space

- No attachments or ancillary documents
- Embed links to research, charter management organizations, existing schools as applicable
- The resumes, vitas, and cash flow statement do not need to follow the previous editorial requirements but should be part of the single PDF.

Initial Review and Invitation to Apply

Once received, the UMSL CSO will have fourteen (14) days to review the prospectus. At this stage, the submitted documents should demonstrate that the founding team has:

- A compelling reason to open a charter school—whether by doing something different, better, or for a different population—as schools of choice, the applicant should be able to show a need and demand for their proposed school, for the population they intend to serve, in the area they intend to offer it;
- A sound educational model—whether an established school model or a new innovation, the founders will have a strong research or experiential basis for a high expectation of a quality education for their expected population;
- Strong support—may be financial or in-kind, but starting a charter school is a resource intensive endeavor with a high possibility of failure, so a successful operator will have spent years developing the support network of families, agencies, teachers and other educational professionals, and funding to be successful; and
- Board capacity—with the diversity of skills and knowledge, experience, and ability to attract and identify strong school leadership and provide stability to nurture the organization.

The UMSL CSO reserves the right but is not obligated to request additional information based on the Prospectus prior to determining whether to invite the applicant to submit a full application. Additional reviews, such as professional consultant evaluations, interviews and due diligence on programs the applicant proposes to use, also may be conducted.

Existing Schools: In the case of an existing school seeking to become a public charter school, the UMSL CSO will set up a site visit to observe the school in operation and interview school leaders.

If the prospectus and additional information based upon it demonstrate the foregoing characteristics, the UMSL CSO will invite the applicant to submit a full application. **In order to open school the following school year, the UMSL CSO must receive the school's application by July 1.**