

Directions to Charter Schools for the
Use of the New York State Education Department's
New York State Charter School Uniform Application Form

July 2021

The 2010 amendments to the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 (Education Law §2854(2)(b)) directed the New York State Education Department to create a “uniform application form” for admission to a charter school in New York State.

Section 2854(2)(b) states that: “Applications for admission to a charter school shall be submitted on a uniform application form created by the department and shall be made available by a charter school in languages predominantly spoken in the community in which such charter school is located.”

All charter schools must use the uniform application form according to the directions below for admissions in each and every school year.

1. A charter school may choose either A or B.
 - (A) Use the uniform application form as created by the Department in which the charter school must provide the indicated information for each required field in Section A of the form, including a deadline by which applications must be submitted. That deadline must be **on or after** April 1st of the applicable school year.
 - (B) A charter school may also adapt the uniform application form within certain parameters outlined below:
 - 1) The application form may be saved onto a school's letterhead and/or a school's logo may be placed on the application form.
 - 2) A school may “brand” the application form by including the school's mission statement, theme, motto, and other explanatory information about the school.
 - 3) One application may apply to multiple schools affiliated with the same management company or education corporation. Each school must be listed on the application and the applicant must indicate for which specific schools they are submitting the application.
 - 4) The information in Section A of the uniform application form must be included on the school's application form, regardless of the format of the application (e.g., paper or electronic). In Section B, only the data elements marked with the asterisk on the uniform application form may be required to be submitted by the applicant, and should be marked on the school's adapted application form with an asterisk (*) and a notation on the form which reads as follows:

** The items marked with an asterisk (*) are the only items that may be required in order to apply to this charter school. Any items not marked by an (*) are optional.*

- 5) A charter school may request other information which may include, for example, current grade, current school, additional contact information and how an applicant heard about the school. **However, these items shall not be required and cannot be marked with the asterisk.**
- 6) The following Non-Discrimination Statement **must** be included on the application form.

***Non-Discrimination Statement:** A charter school shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, gender, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school.*

- 7) Pursuant to Education Law Section 2854(2)(a), a charter school may be designed and approved by its authorizer to provide expanded learning opportunities for students at-risk of academic failure or students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners. A charter school with such an approved design or admission's policy may include a description of the approved school design or admission's policy on the application, request additional information about applicants related to the approved school design (although **these items cannot be required and cannot be marked with the asterisk**), and must indicate that the optional information will be needed if the applicant wants to be considered for the admissions preference. The school may include an addendum to the Non-Discrimination Statement as follows:

However, [Insert name of charter school] provides an academic program specifically designed for {insert information about approved design preferences}. These preferences have been approved by the school's authorizer and are permissible. If an applicant chooses not to provide this optional information, the applicant cannot be disqualified for admission to the school (although the applicant will not receive the admissions preference).

2. Applications to charter schools may be submitted in a variety of formats, including online application systems. However, in order to ensure that applicants who do not have access to the internet are not excluded from applying for admission, charter schools offering online application systems must also accept applications through non-electronic means. Furthermore, the information collected through an electronic common allocation should

mirror the application information found in the NYSED Uniform Application Form, as well as the authorizer-approved application on the charter school's website.

3. The Department strongly encourages charter schools to provide confirmation (e.g., receipt, e-mail, or return postcard) for all applications submitted for entry into the school's admissions lottery. This includes applications submitted via website, e-mail, in-person at the school or designated application location, facsimile, or by postal mail. This ensures that the school and the applicant have confirmation that the application was received and properly registered in the lottery for the school.
4. A charter school may accept "waitlist" applications after the initial application deadline has passed and a lottery has been or will be conducted. No deadline for those "waitlist" applications must be designated.
5. The application form must be made available by a charter school in languages predominantly spoken in the community in which the charter school is located. Furthermore, the school must provide translation services as needed or requested by any applicant.
6. The collection of email addresses must be voluntary rather than mandatory in order to ensure access to the application process for all families.