



NISN FACILITIES PROGRAM

Funding File for Pre-Operational Schools

Most funding applications involve pulling general documents, adapting common case materials, and creating specific content for the opportunity. Being able to focus your time on the last item—information specific to a funding opportunity—gives you more time and focus for developing competitive proposals and helps reduce the stress and rush of meeting grant deadlines.

This is where a “Funding File” comes into play – this is a collection of documents and information that prepare you to easily gather standard attachments and commonly requested information. This should be in electronic/digital format (a hardcopy backup is fine), maintained over time, and well organized. The following checklist will help you create a solid Funding File. This checklist is for use by schools that have not yet opened. If your school is open, please see the checklist for operating schools. If you use a fiscal sponsor or a school foundation/charity as part of grant seeking, complete the Funding File checklist for 501(c)(3)s as well.

To get the most out of the checklist, answer the status question for each item, repeat it at least annually, and schedule internal tasks, deadlines, and responsible parties for items needing follow-up. The priority column rates items with one being the highest priority and three being the lowest. The ratings reflect the likelihood that funders may ask for the item as an attachment or that the information is likely to be requested or helpful in preparing proposals. These numbers can serve as a guide for developing the Funding File over time. For the status column, suggested entries are:

- **On Hand:** You have it yourself. *Action:* Check annually to ensure item is current.
- **Available:** Your school has it, but it is not in a centralized grant file. *Action:* These should be added to your grant file, assuming they do not have privileged information.
- **No-GET:** Your school doesn’t have this, and it is something you would like to add in the next 12 months. *Action:* Schedule tasks and timelines to collect or develop.
- **No-Skip:** Your school doesn’t have this, and the item is not a priority to get during the next 12 months. *Action:* None, revisit categorization annually.
- **N/A:** Not an applicable or relevant item for your school. *Action:* None.

Being able to find information when you need it is another aspect of having a strong Funding File. While you are checking and collecting grant file items, it is a good opportunity to organize and standardize electronic (and possibly print) files. An example file structure is below.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 📁 Financial | 📁 Personnel |
| 📁 Operations | 📁 Programs |
| 📁 Organization Establishment | 📁 Academic Data |
| 📁 Policies | |

About this Document

This was produced as part of the NISN Facilities Training Program, an effort funded by the U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program (Award #U282T180018). Awarded to the NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN), the program supports expansion of opportunities for Native American and other underserved students to attend high-performing, innovative, and culturally responsive charter schools. Work includes technical assistance to schools in three states and documentation and dissemination of information, resources, and tools for facilities needs assessment, planning, and funding.

Funding File Checklist for Pre-Operational Schools

Date Completed:

Name(s) of Checklist Completer(s):

Priority	Status	Document
School Establishment and Strategy		
1		School purpose, mission, vision statements
1		Boilerplate language on history/establishment
1		Description of educational model (approach, values, philosophy)
2		Description of community engagement in school planning, including key counts (e.g., # of stakeholders, # of meetings, # of surveys)
2		School enrollment/growth plan
2		School charter application
2		School tribal authorization
3		Photos of community engagement
3		Documented community/population Needs Assessment
School Facilities		
1		Cost estimates for facilities projects relevant to grant seeking
1		Map and photos showing planned school location
1		Documented plans and budgets for major projects (facility master plan)
2		School site and floor plans for major capital projects
2		Copy of property/building lease agreement or title of ownership
Grant Seeking and Case Building		
1		General data for your school's area (e.g., Census Community Profile)
1		Educational outcomes data for your area and demographic groups of focus
1		School fact sheet/one-pager
2		Electronic letterhead and digital image of signature for school leader
2		Research/data on unmet needs for your student population of focus
2		Copies of prior grant proposals and any grant reports
2		School timeline showing past and future steps in establishment and growth
2		Support statements from high profile individuals and organizations
3		News coverage, interviews, testimonials about new school
3		List of top contributors for the past year (donors, grants, sponsors)
Leadership and Human Resources		
1		Bios and resumes of founder and school development team
1		Current list of governing/school board(s) members with contact information and affiliations
Financial Records and Projections		
1		Organization budget for first operational year
1		Salary levels for staff
1		Program budgets relevant to grant seeking