



Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

2023 Existing Charter School Application

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in sponsorship with the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. This application is designed to provide Fordham staff and external application evaluators with key academic, financial, operations, and governance plans for the proposed school.

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation only accepts applications submitted via our online application management system, Epicenter. This copy (pdf) is included on our website so that prospective applicants and the public are able to view the content of our application. The rubric for application evaluation, used by our review team, is also available on our website. If you plan to submit an application, please contact Theda Sampson at tsampson@edexcellence.net to obtain access to Epicenter.

Thank you,
The Fordham sponsorship team

Sponsoring priorities

Over the next five years, we intend to focus primarily on sponsoring excellent *new* schools in communities lacking enough high-quality options. Our secondary focus will be sponsoring existing high performing schools seeking to change sponsors. Both new and existing schools will be vetted via our application process. We are particularly interested in adding and/or expanding successful Dayton schools.

We are currently not sponsoring schools outside of our established schools' regions which include Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton and Portsmouth.

Resources and References

[Thomas B Fordham Foundation Charter Authorizing](#)

(Application information, background, sponsored schools, school resources, most recent annual report)

Requirements for the submission of the application: Preliminary Review Process

Schools will be given a contact/general information sheet and request for information. We will use the submission and ODE data to verify they meet:

- 1. A majority of the primary indicators per our Academic, Financial and Operations/Governance in our Accountability Plan for the two most recent school years.**

The additional information is to include:

- Academic Data: Local Report Card
- Sponsor Compliance Reports. These must include any deficiencies cited by the current sponsor, along with any corrective action plans or remedies.
- Annual Budget to Actual Results (last 2 years)
- Two most recent audit reports
- LEA Special Education Performance Determination

- 2. The conditions allowing a school to enter a contract with a new sponsor, per 3314.034 (A).**

Notification

The preliminary applicant will receive notification, within 10 days of submitting the information, if they have been approved to move forward with a full application.

Web-based Application Instructions

Logging in to the Application System

Once the new applicant cover sheet has been submitted, application users will receive log in information via email. After a user logs in, the application tasks (sections) will be available with instructions and resource documents. The applicant will be completing each section as a task.

Completing a Task in the Queue

Open up your Tasks by selecting your Tasks Queue found in the upper left corner of the Epicenter home page. You can use the sort arrows () in the header to sort the tasks in your queue. You can also filter them with filters bubbles (explained below). To complete a Compliance Requirement task listed in your Tasks Queue, please complete the following steps:

1. Click the row of the submission requirement you want to complete. This will bring you into that task's Submission Upload page.

The Organization for which you are submitting the requirement will be listed at the top. Make sure you have opened the correct task. Review any Description, Resources, and Instructions that have been provided.

2. Fill in any Submission Tags that are required to be entered. Required submission tags will have an *. Use either the button or button and attach your file(s). If the requirement is a Certification of Completion type, select the appropriate check box. If the requirement includes a Narrative you can either type in a response, upload a file, or both.

Include any needed message to the reviewers/approvers. Your submission can now be viewed in Epicenter.

Application Evaluation Criteria

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation currently authorizes eleven charter schools in Ohio. Sponsorship applications are reviewed by a team comprised of internal and external reviewers. A team leader organizes and guides the process. After a review of the application and submitted documents, applicants who are recommended to move forward by meeting the standard are invited to participate in an interview. Following the interview, a formal review summary is provided to the applicant and to the Fordham board with the team's recommendation. The timeline on the next page details the process.

Evaluation teams are comprised of evaluators with experience and expertise in a variety of fields, including but not limited to curriculum and instruction, special student populations, law, governance, management, leadership, finance, school start-up, and policy. Evaluators will use the following ratings to analyze applicant responses to the questions in the application. Within each section, specific criteria define the expectations for an excellent response that 'Meets the Standard.' The evaluation rubric is available on our website.

Rating Characteristics

Meets the Standard:

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

Approaches the Standard:

The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.

Partially Meets the Standard:

The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in a number of areas.

Does Not Meet the Standard:

The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete, demonstrates lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s ability to carry it out.

Timeline

Timeline for New School Applicants (Schools new to Fordham Sponsorship applications are taken on a rolling application basis with a minimum of six months prior to the school year when the current school would change sponsors.	November 1 Fordham Board Approval School Year FY 2025/Fall 2024 Opening for New Schools
Online application available in Epicenter application management system.	7/01/2023
Deadline to submit application.	8/31/2023
Fordham staff and external reviewers evaluate application. The process includes: <i>Content review. Applications that are incomplete or poorly drafted will not be considered.</i> <i>Individual evaluator review. Applications are reviewed by a team of Fordham staff and external application evaluators.</i> <i>Evaluation team debrief meeting. The evaluation team convenes to discuss the application’s strengths and weaknesses, and decide whether to approve an applicant for an interview.</i>	September 2023
Interviews conducted, lead summaries finalized.	October 1-12, 2023

<p>Interviews take place with the school leadership, governing authority and separately with the current sponsor.</p> <p><i>Applicants are interviewed by the evaluation team. Interviews are in-person at Fordham’s Dayton office. Prior to the interview, applicants will receive an agenda of topics to be covered.</i></p> <p><i>Following the interview, the team convenes to reach consensus on the application. The team leader subsequently drafts the team’s analysis and submits it to Fordham’s senior sponsorship staff.</i></p>	
<p>Fordham senior staff notifies the Fordham board’s Ohio committee of applications that are recommended for a sponsorship contract.</p>	<p>October 30, 2023</p>
<p>Fordham board vote on new school contracts. Applicants are notified in writing as to whether the Fordham board approved or did not approve the applicant for a sponsorship contract</p>	<p>November 1, 2023</p>
<p>Contracts are drafted and sent to school.</p>	<p>Preliminary contract drafted by March 1, 2024, for governing authority feedback.</p>

Cover Sheet

Name of charter school:	
IRN:	
Name of Non-Profit Corporation (School Board):	
Chairperson of the Non-Profit Board:	
Counsel of the Non-Profit Board:	
Mailing Address:	
Indicate the Charter Type (E-school, drop-out recovery, special needs, Montessori, etc.):	
School Facility Address:	
Name of Contact Person Designated by Non-Profit Board:	
Title/Relationship to Board:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

Education Management Organization information:

Name of education management organization (if any):	
Management company contact name:	
Management company contact telephone:	
Management company contact email:	
Is the School Leader or Treasurer employed by the management organization?	

Enrollment: Using your current year enrollment and your five year forecast, please complete.

	Current Year	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
K					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
Total					

Disclosures

Do you have or have you had a relationship with other sponsors, community schools or their affiliates? If YES, please list the school(s) or entities and identify the basis of the relationship (e.g., contractor, employee of operator, treasurer, board member, etc.)
Yes/No

Sponsor, Community School or Affiliate:	Relationship

Has any member of the governing authority including a management company or treasurer/fiscal officer, been involved with an entity that was involved in a bankruptcy, closed for financial reasons, had a finding for recovery, or designated as un-auditable? If YES, please list the school(s) or entities and identify the basis of the relationship (e.g., contractor, employee of operator, treasurer, board member, etc.).
Yes/No

School or Entity:	Relationship:

I certify that all information contained herein is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or termination of the sponsorship contract, if executed.

I understand that incomplete applications and those submitted after the published deadline will not be considered. The person named as the contact person designated by the non-profit board is authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the non-profit board.

I have read, understood, and comply with the above statement.

Name and title

Date

FULL APPLICATION

Schools who meet the indicators in the preliminary application will receive access to our online application. Schools who are looking to change sponsors will complete the same information as provided in our New School Charter Application on pages nine through twenty-four. An example (for reference only) New School Application is available [here](#).