

September 24, 2024

Dear Representatives of the Indiana Department of Education,

NACSA welcomes the opportunity to respond to this Request for Proposals 25-79578 (the RFP) to provide a multifaceted professional development program to support the implementation of high-quality authorizing practices, ultimately ensuring the stability and longevity of Indiana's charter school sector. As a proud Hoosier and former authorizer with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office and the Indiana Charter School Board, I am particularly excited for my team to directly contribute to a stronger authorizing sector in this state.

For more than 20 years, NACSA has worked with charter school authorizers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders across the country to create and maintain a rigorous authorizing infrastructure with the goal of creating high-quality charter schools. Founded in 2000, NACSA is unique both in our exclusive focus on charter school authorizing and in the breadth of our work in that area. Included in this response is an organizational overview of NACSA, a description of our relevant experience, a summary of how NACSA would approach and execute this project with the support of Indiana-based minority and women-owned business enterprises and partner organizations, and outlines of our proposed timeline and budget for accomplishing this important scope of services.

NACSA's ability to supply the requested scope of services in a high-quality and impactful manner is unmatched. We are guided by our *Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*, which provide authorizers with clear guidance to develop, strengthen, and refine their practices in pursuit of educational excellence for all students. Recognized as the leading framework for national best practice, having been written explicitly into half a dozen state charter school laws and implicitly into numerous others, this foundational resource guides authorizing practices across the country and is designed to help authorizers set high expectations for the schools they charter, while recognizing there are many ways for operators to meet those expectations. We will utilize the *Principles & Standards* to design professional development activities and supports, aligned to national standards, that identify the attributes and activities of exemplary authorizers and how they foster continuous improvement in their schools across academic, financial, and student equity outcomes.

Furthermore, NACSA's extensive work in the field demonstrates our ability to deliver. With protocols and assessment tools guided by the *Principles & Standards*, NACSA has conducted more than 90 authorizer evaluations in 33 states, has helped numerous states develop state-specific authorizing standards, and has played an integral role in the development of authorizer accountability systems. A critical component of our authorizer evaluations is a school portfolio analysis and NACSA also leads the field in helping authorizers develop robust and quality-outcomes-oriented performance frameworks through NACSA's *Guide to Performance Frameworks* (first released in 2013 and updated in 2023). Underpinning and supporting our work in the field is our national research on quality authorizing practices. Through our Quality Practices Project (QPP), a first of its kind national research project, NACSA examined the practices of authorizers with the strongest sets of charter schools in the country to develop a more evidence-informed connection between practices and outcomes. See *Attachment F: Technical Proposal* and *Attachment D: Work Samples* for specific examples of projects that demonstrate our capacity to complete similar projects.

Lastly, our work centers authentic and deep stakeholder engagement and a commitment to client service and satisfaction is a critical component of our evaluative protocols and adult learning design. Input from diverse viewpoints informs our evaluative protocols and adult learning design and strengthens our work so we can advance the ideas and practices of authorizing within ever-evolving ecosystems. We know firsthand the importance of listening, gathering data and information, identifying stakeholder needs, seeing things from multiple perspectives, and bringing new ideas to the table to create customized solutions to strengthen authorizing and positively impact student outcomes.

Throughout all our projects, the NACSA team is in regular contact with clients to walk through project plans, provide progress updates, problem solve (as needed), and share draft deliverables for feedback. NACSA believes client satisfaction combined with deliberate and thoughtful stakeholder engagement will yield changes in actions and behaviors; thereby resulting in higher quality educational opportunities for students.

We have been registered with the Secretary of State to do business in Indiana since 2011 and are ready to respond to any questions or requests for additional information you may have. Please feel free to contact me at the email address or phone number provided below.

Sincerely,



M. Karega Rausch, Ph.D.

President and Chief Executive Officer

National Association for Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)

Karegar@qualitycharters.org

(312) 376-2300