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City of Las Vegas

(INTERNAL ONLY) American Rescue Plan - City of Las Vegas Departments Only

Deadline: 12/21/2021

**Youth Development and Social Innovation
Strong Start Academy Elementary School**

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\$ 8,000,000.00 Requested

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1. Department/Division Name

Youth Development and Social Innovation

2. What is the name of the program for which you are requesting ARP funding support?

Strong Start Academy Elementary School

3. The proposed program is:

- A new program
- The continuation of an existing program
- The expansion of an existing program

4. Provide a description of the program for which you are requesting ARP funds. Describe the planned use of funds, project goal, components of service delivery, location of services, and intended recipients. Please include if your department plans to collaborate with other departments or organizations.

Strong Start Academy Elementary School (SSAES) is a proposed public K-5 charter school serving students in targeted areas of zip codes of 89101, 89104, 89106. SSAES projects a 180-student enrollment for Year 1 (school year 2022-2023), scaling up to 360 students by Year 4 (school year 2025-2026). The school will be located in Downtown Las Vegas. SSAES's goal is to serve students in Las Vegas with an interdisciplinary, project-based and research driven curriculum. SSAES is currently undergoing application review and has been selected for a capacity interview by the State Public Charter Authority for October 5, 2021. Notice of charter approval and award is scheduled for December 2021. The request for funding in the amount of \$8,000,000 encompasses \$5,400,000 for a per-pupil funding amount of \$5,000, per pupil, per year, for four years.

As previously stated, the school will scale enrollment to a max of 360 students by adding one grade level a year equating to 60 new students every year. Year 1 (2022-2023) enrollment: 180 students, \$900,000. Year 2 (2023-2024) enrollment: 240 students, \$1,200,000. Year 3 (2024-2025) enrollment: \$1,500,000. Year 4 (2025-2026) enrollment: \$1,800,000. The remaining \$2,600,000 of the requested amount will be utilized for general operating expenses and start up instructional supplies. During the early years, SSAES will have short-term and one-time purchasing needs as a new school campus. Instructional, academic and support equipment include: furniture, technology software and hardware, laboratory tools, curriculum textbooks in both English and Spanish, food service equipment and specialty program supplies (art, physical education, music, etc.). These items are a necessity to deliver a rigorous and comprehensive academic program. Requested funds, if awarded, will be encumbered to CLV Strong Start Academy Elementary Schools Inc., a Nevada Nonprofit Corporation established to operate the school on July 2021 and funds will be fully spent by 2026.

5. Describe the need for the proposed program or service. Explain the issue using verifiable data wherever possible, cite relevant studies, and describe your program's impact.

SSAES plans to serve students in zip codes (89101, 89104, 89106) that have been historically underserved, with 17,659 students currently enrolled in a 1-star or 2-star rated elementary school, with six of those elementary schools located within 2-miles of the proposed location of the school. SSAES will provide high-quality public school seats for students in these neighborhoods and will be a 4-star or 5-star school option for parents and students. The communities of CLV Wards 1, 3, and 5 will likely reflect the population of students that SSAES will serve, predominately Latinx (approximately an average of 62%) and Black (approximately an average of 18%) students, with roughly an average of 90% of the student population receiving free and reduced lunch, an average of 40% being English Language Learners, and 12% special education. It is important to successfully create an environment where students feel safe, cared for, and confident in their abilities to learn. SSAES is committed to having a staff that is reflective of the student population, leading to a more positive experience for students. Studies have shown that the benefits of having teachers with similar demographic characteristics to their students result in higher motivation, quality communication, and greater future aspirations. Building a strong academic program starts with a safe and nurturing environment where students can be free to be themselves. SSAES will strategically promote the four C's of 21st Century skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity to prepare students be able to demonstrate strong academic outcomes throughout their educational experience. These skills are imperative for student development and growth as they continue their education to middle and high school and ultimately as they transition to post-secondary plans of college and/or career. The future of workforce in Southern Nevada depends on these young citizens and investing in high-quality education is an investment on our local economy.

6. The type of funding needed (select only one):

- One time funding
- Ongoing funding
- Both

7. Please provide an explanation for why funding is needed for the proposed program or service.

The request of the \$5,000 per-pupil funding from the American Rescue Plan is to augment the estimated \$7,300 per-pupil funding expected from the State of Nevada to fortify the educational foundation of the school and ensure high-quality programming and student achievement. Key identifiers of SSAES that differentiates it from comparable public schools in the target area is small enrollment and classrooms (1:20 teacher to studio ratio), funneling majority of funds directly into the classroom (higher salaries for teaching staff compared to CCSD salaries), providing a longer school day and providing bilingual education through research-based curriculum. These core pillars were identified as "non-negotiables" since the inception of the planning and application process to ensure that SSAES has a great impact in the targeted communities and demonstrates growth and improvement in student achievement data. Funding for general operating expenses and instructional supplies and equipment is needed as they are fundamental to be able to deliver a rigorous and comprehensive academic program.

8. Please provide the estimated program budget and justification.

The request for funding in the amount of \$8,000,000 is based on a per-pupil funding amount of \$5,000 for four years and general operating expenses and start-up instructional supplies (described above).

9. Provide your program's implementation timeline.

SSAES, if approved by the State Public Charter Authority, will open in August 2022. That will mark the beginning of the first school year. The charter is for 6 school years. Fiscal Year 2021-2022 is the school's incubation year. Throughout the incubation year, the project undergoes governing board preparation, capacity interviews and ultimately if awarded, student recruitment and enrollment, staff recruitment, hiring, training and all the operational and administrative functions to allow for a successful school opening.

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1. If awarded, do you agree to abide by all federal requirements listed in the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Reporting and Compliance Guidance and the requirements under the Uniform Guidance (2 CRF Part 200)?
Refer to the following link - <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal->

governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds/recipient-compliance-and-reporting-responsibilities (copy and paste to browser)

Yes

No

2. Are you a public organization or a non-profit organization as defined by IRS 501c3 or 501c4?

Yes

No

3. Does your organization currently possess a City of Las Vegas Business License with an address where services will be provided?

Yes

No

4. What is your organizational mission? Also, briefly describe the type(s) of services/products currently being offered:

The City of Las Vegas works continuously to improve our city. We provide multiple services and programs to make life better, including parks, classes, cultural offerings and grant opportunities. We are building a sustainable community, while preserving our unique history for future generations.

5. Name of program/activity for which you are requesting ARP funds:

Strong Start Academy Elementary School

6. The proposed project/program is:

A new activity

An expansion of an existing activity

An activity to address financial hardship due to the pandemic (payroll, retraining, operating costs, and Covid-19 prevention/mitigation)

7. Provide a description of the program/activity for which you are requesting funds. Describe the project goal, components of service delivery, location of services, intended participants, and the planned use of funds.

Strong Start Academy Elementary School (SSAES) is a proposed public K-5 charter school, serving students in targeted areas of zip codes of 89101, 89104, 89106. SSAES projects a 180-student enrollment for Year 1 (school year 2022-2023), scaling up to 360 students by Year 4 (school year 2025-2026). The school will be located in Downtown Las Vegas. SSAES's goal is to serve students in Las Vegas with an interdisciplinary, project-based and research driven curriculum. SSAES is currently undergoing application review, with final notice of charter approval projected for January 2022. The request for funding in the amount of \$6,000,000 encompasses \$5,400,000 for a per-pupil funding amount of \$5,000, per pupil, per year, for four years. As previously stated, the school will scale enrollment to a max of 360 students by adding one grade level a year equating to 60 new students every year. Year 1 (2022-2023) enrollment: 180 students, \$900,000. Year 2 (2023-2024) enrollment: 240 students, \$1,200,000. Year 3 (2024-2025) enrollment: 300 students, \$1,500,000. Year 4 (2025-2026) enrollment: 360 students, \$1,800,000. The remaining 600,000 of the requested amount will be utilized for general operating expenses and start-up instructional needs during the school's incubation period. During the incubation period, SSAES will have short-term and one-time purchasing needs as a new school campus. Instructional, academic and support equipment include: furniture, technology software and hardware, laboratory tools, curriculum textbooks in both English and Spanish, food service equipment and specialty program supplies (art, physical education, music, etc.). These items are a necessity to deliver a rigorous and comprehensive academic program. Requested funds, if awarded, will be encumbered to CLV Strong Start Academy Elementary Schools Inc., a Nevada Nonprofit Corporation established to operate the school, on July 2021 and funds will be fully spent by 2026.

8. Describe the need for the proposed service. Explain the issue and why funding is necessary to address it. Use verifiable data wherever possible, cite waitlists if applicable, and link the problem to the solution.

On a national level, pandemic impacts on student outcomes affected elementary school students to a greater extent than they affected middle and high school students. According to the Center for Assessment, the impact of COVID-19 on student academic performance is estimated to be two or four times as large as the impact Hurricane Katrina had on students of Louisiana (Department of Education, 2021). Research published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, reports that there is a direct correlation between academic proficiency by third grade and success in high school and beyond. The 2020-2021 proficiency rates in Nevada, as determined by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), show a 39.8% ELA proficiency in grades 3-5 and a 28.2% Math proficiency in grades 3-5. Overall, there is an 11.2% decrease in students demonstrating grade level proficiency in comparison to 2018-2019. Results are even more dismal for certain subgroups: African American student show a 24.2% proficiency in ELA, 11.9% in Math, Hispanic/Latino students show a 29.9% rate in ELA and 18.1% rate in Math, and English Learner students show 10.3% rate in ELA and 8.1% in Math. Strong Start Academy Elementary School is a proposed intervention that with adequate funding, will prevent further learning loss and widening of the opportunity gaps that exist within the referenced subgroups.

SSAES plans to serve students in zip codes (89101, 89104, 89106) that have been historically underserved, with 17,659 students currently enrolled in a 1-star or 2-star rated elementary school, with six of those elementary schools located within 2-miles of the proposed location of the school. SSAES will provide high-quality public school seats for students in these neighborhoods and will be a 4-star or 5-star school option for parents and students. The communities of CLV Wards 1, 3, and 5 will likely reflect the population of students that SSAES will serve, predominately Latinx (approximately an average of 62%) and African American (approximately an average of 18%) students, with roughly an average of 90% of the student population receiving free and reduced lunch, an average of 40% being English Language Learners, and 12% special education. It is important to successfully create an environment where students feel safe, cared for, and confident in their abilities to learn. SSAES is committed to having a staff that is reflective of the student population, leading to a more positive experience for students. Studies have shown that the benefits of having teachers with similar demographic characteristics to their students result in higher motivation, quality communication, and greater future aspirations. SSAES will strategically promote the four C's of 21st Century skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity to prepare students be able to demonstrate strong academic outcomes throughout their educational experience. These skills are imperative for student development and growth as they continue their education to middle and high school and ultimately as they transition to post-secondary plans of college and/or career. The future of workforce in Southern Nevada depends on these young citizens and investing in high-quality education is an investment on our local economy.

9. Please describe the program intake process and client eligibility requirements.

SSAES plans to serve students in zip codes 89101, 89104, 89106. There will be targeted recruitment in those communities to ensure that the student population comes from neighborhoods that are served by 1-star or 2-star schools. Additionally, there is a student pipeline from the City's Pre-K Programs through Strong Start Academies and Strong Start GO! Mobile Pre-K. All seats in the city's Pre-K programs are 100% subsidized and therefore those students will have preferential enrollment in SSAES. SSAES will be a public charter school; therefore, it will be open to all students at no cost. There will be no eligibility requirements. The enrollment process will be done through a lottery as mandated by charter regulations and a waitlist will be implemented if there is a surplus in student applications to available seats.

10. How many total clients (within the city of Las Vegas limits) will your proposed program serve during April 2022 and December 2024 time period?

300 students

11. Is this program/activity for which you are requesting funding supported by evidence-based practices?

Refer to the following link - <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Evidence-Webinar.pdf> (copy and paste to browser)

Yes

No

12. If yes, please describe the evidence-based practice your program/activity is supported by.

SSAES will provide a holistic, high-quality educational option to students in CLV Wards 1, 3, and 5 that will emphasize individualized supports for every stage of development. As previously stated, the students in the targeted zip codes currently attend 1-star and 2-star schools. The core services that have the most influence on student achievement are unavailable to students in those areas, contributing to the achievement gap that exists between low-income and high-income communities. High-quality education is one of the most important determinants of the quality of livelihood of a community. To deliver and implement premium education, money matters. Funding is a critical component in high-quality education and it has been proven to lead to improved outcomes. A 2016 study showed that between 1990-2011, states that reformed school finance policies in order to allocate more funding to high-poverty school districts narrowed the achievement gap by an average of one-fifth (Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 2016). The request of the \$5,000 per-pupil funding from the American Rescue Plan is to augment the estimated \$7,300 per-pupil funding expected from the State of Nevada to fortify the educational foundation of the school and ensure high-quality programming and student achievement. Key identifiers of SSAES that differentiates it from comparable public schools in the target area is small enrollment and classrooms (1:20 teacher to student ratio), funneling majority of funds directly into the classroom (higher salaries for teaching staff compared to CCSD salaries), providing a longer school day and providing bilingual education through research-based curriculum. These core pillars were identified as "non-negotiables" since the inception of the planning and application process to ensure that SSAES has a great impact in the targeted communities and demonstrates growth and improvement in student achievement data. Funding for general operating expenses and instructional supplies and equipment is needed as they are fundamental to be able to deliver a rigorous and comprehensive academic program.

13. Describe the performance evaluation plan for your program/activity, including measures for outputs and outcomes.

SSAES performance evaluation plan will follow Nevada student achievement and proficiency framework. SBAC, Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) and Brigance will be the assessments used for student achievement and proficiency data that will drive and inform school policies and educational plans. These annual assessments will not be the only data point used to evaluate the success of the school. SSAES will be expected to provide quarterly progress reports and presentations to the Las Vegas City Council to ensure transparency of data and information. It is the goal of SSAES to out-perform comparable schools in the district in the areas of ELA, Math and Social Studies.

14. Please provide program/activity data for the past three (3) years that illustrates the impact of your program. What method is utilized to collect this information? How often is this data collected?

SSAES is a new program. SSAES, if approved by the State Public Charter Authority, will open in August 2022. That will mark the beginning of the first school year. The charter is for 6 school years. Fiscal Year 2021-2022 is the school's incubation year. As previously stated, assessments such as SBAC, MAP and Brigrance will be used to collect data and information. This data is collected on an annual basis.

15. Describe your organization's capacity to administer the program. What systems does your organization have in place to ensure the program will be successful?

The city of Las Vegas has established a Nevada Nonprofit Corporation, Strong Start Academy Elementary Schools Inc., to operate the school. The nonprofit will be run by the governing board of the school which is composed of experienced professionals in the field of Finance, Human Resources, Law, Policy and Education. Aside from the board, SSAES will be held accountable by city of Las Vegas staff and the Las Vegas City Council.

16. Describe your plan for financial sustainability and ongoing program support post-ARP funding.

As a public charter school in the state of Nevada, SSAES will receive per-pupil funding revenue each year of operation. The maximum enrollment of the school will be 360 students, and if awarded, ARP funding will be available until maximum enrollment. Through this timeline, SSAES will have had the opportunity to invest in professional development, software, curriculum and other structures that will continue to serve the school population as it increases by 60 students each year.

17. List any other funding sources your organization is seeking to obtain to support the program/activity (including ARP funding from other jurisdictions).

SSAES has submitted a proposal for federal funding through the Great Schools for Nevada Federal Charter School Program.

18. Identify and describe any audit findings, investigations, probationary statuses imposed by any funding organizations in the past three years.

SSAES is a new program. SSAES, if approved by the State Public Charter Authority, will open in August 2022. That will mark the beginning of the first school year.

19. Has your organization ever defaulted on a loan or filed for bankruptcy?

Yes

No

20. List any current collaborative partnerships of the program/activity. Summarize the role of each partner and describe how the collaboration enhances performance goals. (Upload MOUs, etc.)

SSAES has been fortunate to have many supporters of the community, including local families, civic leaders, non-profits, educational organizations and philanthropists. The school has partnerships with several organizations that support the vision, but also plans to partner with additional organizations to provide students at SSAES with the best possible resources. A key partnership for SSAES is DISCOVERY Children's Museum where they have committed to provide our educators with professional development opportunities, access to the Educator Mix & Mingle event, subsidized admission for field trips and DISCOVERY on Wheels program. Additional partnerships include TNTP, Opportunity 180, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Schools of Medicine, Dental, and Nursing, Trauma Recovery Yoga (TRY), Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Nevada, and many others that support SSAES' goal of equal access to quality education for all students. SSAES values strong educators, and through our partnership with TNTP, the school will be able to develop a pipeline of effective, diverse educators that will support rigorous academics for students. Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Nevada has committed to providing SSAES students with after-school programming that will reinforce academic and enrichment activities that take place during the school day and in the after-school setting. SSAES will also work closely with Targeted Creative Solutions in the development of evaluations for ongoing feedback of curricular support and revisions of programming to best support student outcomes.

21. I understand that funding will be disbursed on performance, compliance and pre-approved funding plan.

Yes

No

22. Provide last three years of your organization's funding and expenditure history.

SSAES is a new program. SSAES, if approved by the State Public Charter Authority, will open in August 2022. That will mark the beginning of the first school year.

23. Provide a detailed program budget.

Please see two documents: SSAES ARP Budget- specific for this application and Strong Start Academy Elementary School Financial Workbook - School budget for the charter 6 years of operation.

24. If only partial amount of the requested funding is granted, will you be able to successfully implement your proposed program/project?

Yes

No

25. Explain in detail how the proposed program relates to the pandemic and provides a pathway for recovery.

On a national level, pandemic impacts on student outcomes affected elementary school students to a greater extent than they affected middle and high school students. According to the Center for Assessment, the impact of COVID-19 on student academic performance are estimated to be two or four times as large as the impact Hurricane Katrina has on students of Louisiana (Department of Education, 2021). Research published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, reports that there is a direct correlation between academic proficiency by third grade to success in high school and beyond. The 2020-2021 proficiency rates in Nevada, as determined by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), show a 39.8% ELA proficiency in grades 3-5 and a 28.2% Math proficiency in grades 3-5. Overall, there is an 11.2% decrease in students demonstrating grade level proficiency in comparison to 2018-2019. Results are even more dismal for certain subgroups: African American students show a 24.2% proficiency in ELA, 11.9% in Math, Hispanic/Latino students show a 29.9% rate in ELA and 18.1% rate in Math, and English Learner students show 10.3% rate in ELA and 8.1% in Math. Strong Start Academy Elementary School is a proposed intervention that with adequate funding, will prevent further learning loss and widening of the opportunity gaps that exist within the referenced subgroups.

26. Describe how the funding if awarded will directly benefit residents in the Las Vegas jurisdiction and your ability to report on it.

This funding will allow SSAES to provide high-quality education to families in zip codes 89101, 89104 and 89106, located in CLV Wards 1, 3 and 5, which in turn will lead to improved student academic outcomes in both literacy in math, which are major determinants in high school graduation rates.

Documents [top](#)

Documents Requested *

Required? **Attached Documents ***

Partnerships, MOU's

Other supporting documents

Budget



[SSAES ARP Budget](#)

[Strong Start Academy Elementary School Financial Workbook](#)

Grant Award Orientation Workbook

Extra

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