

Charter School Enrollment Process

2023
2024

New York City charter schools are free, public schools open to ALL children, making them some of the most accessible public schools in the city. If the number of applicants to a charter school exceeds the number of available seats, then charter schools are legally required to conduct a random enrollment lottery to fill them.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

There are three easy ways to apply to a charter school:

1. Use the Common Online Charter School Application to apply to multiple schools at once. Visit charternyc.org/apply-online for details.
2. Visit each school's website to download its application or apply online.
3. Stop by the school to pick up an application or call the school and ask staff to mail you an application.



How does a student get into a charter school?

Families must fill out and submit a brief application, providing basic information about the student, to each charter school they are interested in attending. Applications must be submitted by April 1 each year¹. Students are admitted according to the number of seats available.

Why do many charter schools run lotteries for admission?

If a charter school receives more applications than it has seats available, then the school is required by law to run a randomized lottery to admit students. All students who submitted an application will automatically be entered in the admissions lottery. Charter school lotteries are typically held in April and May. Applicants whose names are not drawn in the lottery are placed on a waiting list and may be contacted as seats become available.

Are there preferences built into the lotteries?

Charter schools are required to offer a lottery preference to siblings of enrolled students and to students who reside in the local Community School District (CSD). Parents can find their CSD at www.nyccharterschools.org/charter-school-search.

Many charter schools offer preferences for students who are academically at risk, including those from low-income families, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and children of school staff.² Lottery preferences vary by charter school.

Who oversees the charter school lottery process?

Charter school applications and lottery procedures are governed by state law and regulations. Each charter school's enrollment practices are overseen by its authorizer: either the New York State Board of Regents, the SUNY Board of Trustees, or the NYC Schools Chancellor.

142,500

estimated students enrolled in
NYC charter schools*

*Projections based on NYSED enrollment data

¹ Contact individual charter schools for details as some may extend their application deadline past April 1.

² Charter school staff preference is limited to 15% of the school's entire student body.