

Charter School Enrollment Process

2018
2019

Charter schools are free, public schools open to all New York City children. New York City's public charter schools are legally required enroll students by random lottery, making them some of the most accessible public schools in NYC. Accessibility is critical because not every family can afford to live in an affluent school zone, and not all students qualify for admission to a selective public school.

How do charter school lotteries work?

Charter school lotteries are held each April, with applications due by April 1.¹

To enter a charter school lottery, parents fill out a brief form with basic information about the student. Every charter school offers paper applications, and most offer an online application as well.

Applicants whose names are not drawn in the lottery are placed on a waiting list and may be admitted 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.

I want to submit an application. What's next?

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 www.nyccharterschools.org/apply 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.



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