

Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina

Request for Proposals

2024-2025 Independent Audit

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Governing Board of Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina (hereinafter called the “charter network”) invites qualified independent auditors (hereinafter called “auditor”) having sufficient governmental accounting and auditing experience in performing an audit in accordance with the specifications outlined in this Request for Proposal (RFP) to submit a proposal. There is no expressed or implied obligation for Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina to reimburse firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request.

The specific details shown herein shall be considered minimum unless otherwise shown. The specifications, terms, and conditions included with this RFP shall govern in any resulting contract(s) unless approved otherwise in writing by the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board. The bidder consents to personal jurisdiction and venue in a state court of competent jurisdiction in York County, South Carolina.

The charter network currently operates a single campus in Rock Hill, South Carolina, known as Ascent Classical Academy of Fort Mill (“charter campus”). The campus operates with its own accounting records

Type of Audit

The audit will encompass a financial and compliance examination of the basic financial statements in accordance with the laws and/or regulations of the State of South Carolina, which include requirements for the minimum scope of the audit. The financial and compliance audit will cover federal, state, and local funding sources in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards; *Government Auditing Standards*; the Single Audit Act of 1984; the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996; the provisions of OMB Circular No. A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, including revisions published in *Federal Register* June 27, 2003; the State Single Audit Implementation Act; and all other applicable laws and regulations.

Period

The charter network intends to continue the relationship with the auditor for no less than three years on the basis of annual negotiation after the completion of the first year contract. Each year after negotiation has taken place an annual contract documenting the terms of the audit will be signed. The Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board reserves the right to request proposals at any time following the first year of this contract. Thus, prepare proposals for the following years, with Year one being the only obligated year:

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 – Ascent Classical Academy of Fort Mill (single campus)

July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Requirements

The audit must be conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards; *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; Office of Management and

Budget Circular No.A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*; the State Single Audit Implementation Act, and any other applicable procedures for the audit of a government's financial statements prepared in accordance with GAAP. The Auditor will prepare most year-end adjusting journal entries. The auditor will be ultimately responsible for the preparation, typing, proofing, printing, and copying of the Basic Financial Statement, supplementary information and compliance reports. The Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina and its financial staff and financial consultants will be actively involved in the MD&A, and other schedules section preparation where/when applicable.

The auditor will submit a draft of the Financial Statement to be reviewed in detail by the Finance Committee of the Governing Board. This draft should be submitted to the charter network in time to allow ample review and corrections.

The timing of this should ensure final completion of the Financial Statements no later than October 15th for the year ended the prior June 30th.

While Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina recognizes the audit firm's schedule remains at the firm's discretion, the Board prefers interim fieldwork be completed in early June with year-end fieldwork beginning no later than August 31st and to be completed by October 1st. An agreed upon post-closing trial balance must exist no later than October 10th. The Finance Committee will expect a listing of requested information needed for the audit at the preplanning conference, periodic conferences during the conduct of the audit, as well as an exit conference prior to the completion of fieldwork.

The audit must be completed and reports rendered on or before October 15th. A preliminary draft of the audit and required journal entries must be submitted to the Finance Committee by October 1 for proofing and reconciliation to the charter school's records. Three copies of each audit report, management letter, and other applicable reports must be supplied to the Finance Committee within the time frame cited above.

The financial audit opinion will cover the financial statements for the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the financial statements of the aggregate discretely presented component charter schools (if applicable), each major fund, and the remaining fund information, which collectively constitutes the basic financial statements. The combining and individual financial statements, schedules, and related information are not necessary for fair presentation, but will be presented as additional analytical data. This supplemental information, as required by GASB 34, will be subjected to the tests and other auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements, and an opinion will be given as to whether the supplemental information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basis financial statements taken as a whole. If required by current standards applicable to charter school audits, the auditor shall also express an opinion on the budgetary comparison information for the general fund, the major funds, and any annually budgeted special revenue funds. An opinion will not be given on the Management Discussion and Analysis.

The working papers shall be retained and made available upon request for no less than three years from the date of the audit report. In the event that circumstances arise during the audit that require work to be performed in excess of the original estimates, any additional costs will be negotiated prior to commencement of the work and an amended contract will be approved by the governing board.

Audit Contract & Payment of Audit Fees

The audit contract must be approved by the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board prior to any billing. Progress billings will be accepted up to 75% of the total fee prior to submission of the audited financial statements to the Finance Committee and their approval of the audited financial statements.

Description of Selection Process

Three copies of each section of the proposal should be submitted at the time and place indicated under the section entitled "Time Schedule for Awarding Contract." Proposals will be submitted in two sections. The first section will be the firm's prior experience and qualifications of its personnel in performing governmental audits. Section two will be the firm's cost estimate section. The Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board or its Finance Committee will evaluate the auditor/firm on educational and technical qualifications. The firm best meeting the Board's expectations for experience, audit approach, and cost requirements will be selected.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT COST, WHILE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR, WILL NOT BE A SOLE DETERMINING FACTOR. UNUSUALLY LOW BIDS THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY OUT OF LINE WITH OTHER BIDDERS OR ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN OUR CURRENT FEES WILL RAISE CONCERN. THE LOWEST BID WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY BE AWARDED PREFERENTIAL CONSIDERATION.

The Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive technicalities, and to be the sole judge of suitability of the services for its intended use and further specifically reserve the right to make the award in the best interest of the school. Failure to respond to any requirements outlined in the RFP, or failure to enclose copies of the required documents, may disqualify the bid.

First Section

The first section should address the requested information below. The corresponding responses should begin with the number below for the requested information.

1. *Identify the supervising auditor by name located within the local office that will handle the audit. Please provide his/her CPA license number(s) and issuing state(s), academic degrees held and years of experience auditing charter schools and/or school districts.*
2. *Identify the staff members by name located within the local office that will handle the audit. For each, please indicate if that staff member is licensed, academic degrees held and years of experience auditing charter schools and/or school districts.*

3. *Provide a list of the local office's charter school audit clients since over the past three years, indicating the type(s) of services performed and the number of years served for each. Responsive firms should include any relevant information regarding audits performed on financial statements prepared under the new reporting model.*
4. *Describe your audit organization's participation in AICPA-sponsored or comparable quality control programs (peer review). Provide a copy of the firm's current peer review.*
5. *Describe any specialized skills, training, or background in public finance of assigned individuals. This may include participation in State or national professional organizations, speaker or instructor roles in conferences or seminars, or authorship of articles and books.*
6. *Provide names, addresses, and telephone numbers of current and prior charter school audit clients who may be contacted for a reference.*
7. *Provide a copy of the firm's professional liability/malpractice insurance policy (a cover page noting coverage amounts is sufficient).*
8. *Describe any regulatory or disciplinary action taken by the South Carolina Board of Accountancy, the AICPA, the Internal Revenue Service, the South Carolina Department of Revenue, the Securities and Exchange Commission or any other regulatory body against the proposing audit firm, its local office or its members.*

Second Section

Proposals should include completed cost estimate sheets and any other necessary cost information in a *separate, sealed* envelope marked – “Cost Estimate.” The school plans to evaluate the qualifications of all firms submitting proposals before considering the Cost Estimate.

This second section should consist of a completed cost estimate sheet (a draft engagement letter is acceptable), which will include the following information:

1. *The scope of the audit and related procedures.*
2. *Assistance expected from the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina staff, if other than outlined in the RFP.*
3. *Tentative schedule for completing the audit within the specified deadlines of the RFP.*
4. *Specify costs using the format below for the audit year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.*
5. *For the two audit years which follow, list the estimated costs as outlined below. The cost for the audit year ending June 30, 2024 is binding, while the second and third years are estimated costs. Cost estimates must indicate the basis for the charges and whether the amount is a “not-to exceed” amount.*
 - A. *The total costs of performing the audit as specified in the engagement letter and in accordance with the requirements of this RFP.*

- B. *Travel costs – itemize transportation and other travel costs separately.*
 - C. *Cost of supplies and materials – itemize.*
 - D. *Other costs – completely identify and itemize.*
 - E. *Any costs contingent upon certain events.*
 - F. *If applicable, note your method of determining increases in audit costs on a year to year basis.*
6. *Please list any other information the firm may wish to provide.*

Time Schedule for Awarding the Contract

Please acknowledge the receipt of this request for proposal and your intent to respond with a proposal by 06/01/25. Proposals must be received on or before 06/22/25.

Please submit proposals electronically by emailing the proposal to derec.shuler@ascentclassical.org.

The Finance Committee will review the proposals and make a recommendation to the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board on or before 07/11/25 at which time the contract will be awarded.

Description of the Charter Network and Its Accounting System

Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina is a South Carolina charter network operating a single campus, Ascent Classical Academy of Fort Mill, for the 2024-2025 school year in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The school's student population in 2024-2025 is approximately 213 students. Ascent Classical Academy of Fort Mill is authorized by the Charter Institute at Erskine. The school has approximately 19 staff, who are employees of the charter management organization Ascent Classical Academies.

Funds

Federal, State and Local Funds

The campus was awarded a Charter School Program grant this current school year of approximately \$300,000 with about \$55,000 in other federal grants and awards, to include IDEA and Title II.

Budgets

The charter school budgets all funds on the modified accrual basis of accounting in a format consistent with the SCDOE Uniform Chart of Accounts and the SC Financial Accounting Handbook. The charter school does not maintain an encumbrance system.

Accounting Records

The Ascent Classical Academy of Fort Mill maintains all its accounting records at the school in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The charter school maintains its journals and ledgers on Intacct software provided by Sage. The charter school has contracted its general ledger, accounts payable and payroll functions to Prestige School Solutions.

Assistance Available to Auditor

The charter school will make available to the auditor sufficient help to pull and re-file records, and prepare and mail all necessary confirmations. A trial balance with budgeted amounts will be made available via electronic copy only on the date specified by the auditor. The following accounting procedures will be completed and documents prepared by the charter school.

- The books of account will be fully balanced.
- All subsidiary ledgers will be reconciled to control accounts.
- All bank account reconciliations for each month will be completed.

The charter school's personnel will provide documents, records and files as required by the auditor.

The proposed engagement letter should be addressed to:

**Ascent Classical Academies
PO Box 1490
Golden, CO 80402**

and via email to derec.shuler@ascentclassical.org