OpenStreetMap US Programs

Charter Project Guidelines

Overview

With the OSM US Charter Program, OpenStreetMap US actively encourages the development of tools, programs and services that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the OpenStreetMap platform in the United States, and beyond.

The Charter Program provides a framework for long term stewardship and is loosely based on the fiscal sponsorship model for governance of non-profit organizations. Projects are given a home and the ability to fundraise through the OpenStreetMap US organization, a 501(c)(3) charity incorporated in Washington, DC. OpenStreeMap US maintains all legal and fiduciary responsibility for the charter project, its employees, and activities. The existing maintainers or contributors still control the project, but OpenStreetMap US supports the development of a neutral, well-documented governance process.

The program supports, guides and promotes projects that further the mission and purpose of OpenStreetMap US, which is to educate the public about OpenStreetMap, ensure broad availability of data, continuous improvement of the map, and an active community of contributors.

Key Documents:
- 🗎 Charter Project Agreement Final
- 🗎 Steering Committee Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to onboard potential and new Charter Projects, as well as serve as an ongoing reference. In this guide:

Revised Version: October 2022

OpenStreetMap US Charter Project Guidelines

1. Becoming a Charter Project of OpenStreetMap US

1.1 Benefits of the Charter Project Status

- **Formally become a part of the OpenStreetMap ecosystem**
  The OpenStreetMap ecosystem thrives on collaboration. By becoming a Charter Project, your project becomes a named collaborator in the OpenStreetMap US community.

- **Enjoy the benefits of 501(c)(3) Status**
  OpenStreetMap US provides your project the advantages of being a 501(c)(3) without the overhead, and most importantly, a means to direct funding and resources for your project. In return, OpenStreetMap US retains a percentage of any donations earmarked for your project to help us cover administrative costs.

- **Expand your Reach**
  Charter Projects benefit from the growing OpenStreetMap US volunteer network, membership, and social media reach. OpenStreetMap US has an active blog, a monthly newsletter, and social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram with over 12,150 followers and growing. Together we can expand this community, amplify collective efforts, and bring people together across projects.

- **A Neutral, Sustainable Home**
  Charter Projects benefit from conversations around strategy and governance with OpenStreetMap US leadership who can provide perspective and insight into your project. As part of a larger nonprofit organization OpenStreetMap US will support your project as it matures and provide a neutral home long into the future.

1.2. Eligibility

All projects and related activities must support in some way the stated mission and purpose of OpenStreetMap US. In addition, your project should meet the following criteria:

- Focus related to OpenStreetMap,
- Not already be a 501c3 organization or incorporated as a for-profit enterprise,
- Strong preference for projects that are consistent with open-source principles and in line with the transparency & openness principles of the OpenStreetMap US mission,
- Have a minimum of 2 dedicated maintainers or contributors, with one identified project lead and the intention to grow to 3 committee members within the first year,
- Recognition that your project will be under the umbrella of OpenStreetMap US, who may be legally responsible for the operations and activities of the project.

🔍 OpenStreetMap US Charter Project Guidelines

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and approved by the Executive Director & Board of Directors.

What Kind of Projects Are We Looking For?
- Software or tools that support OpenStreetMap
- OSM related projects
- Long term vision & ongoing programming

What Might Not Qualify? (Things we are NOT looking for)[1]
- Events or mapathons, workshops, sprints, etc.
- Standalone or short-term mapping initiatives
- Projects that are just looking for one-time funding
- Projects in the early idea stage
- Projects with a short timeline (<1y)

Please ensure that your Project meets the eligibility criteria above. Please also closely read the Template Agreement to understand the legal and operational implications of entering into a Charter relationship with OpenStreetMap US.

If you are unsure if you qualify, or if you have any questions about the criteria or the Agreement, please get in touch with OpenStreetMap US by writing us at team@openstreetmap.us. If your project or idea does not qualify, OpenStreetMap US may have other opportunities for funding and/or support.

1.3. Application Process

You can initiate your application by completing the Application Form. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. OSM US is looking to build strong, long term relationships with our Charters, so expect the process to take up to 3 months once you submit your application to hear a decision. Apply to be a Charter Project
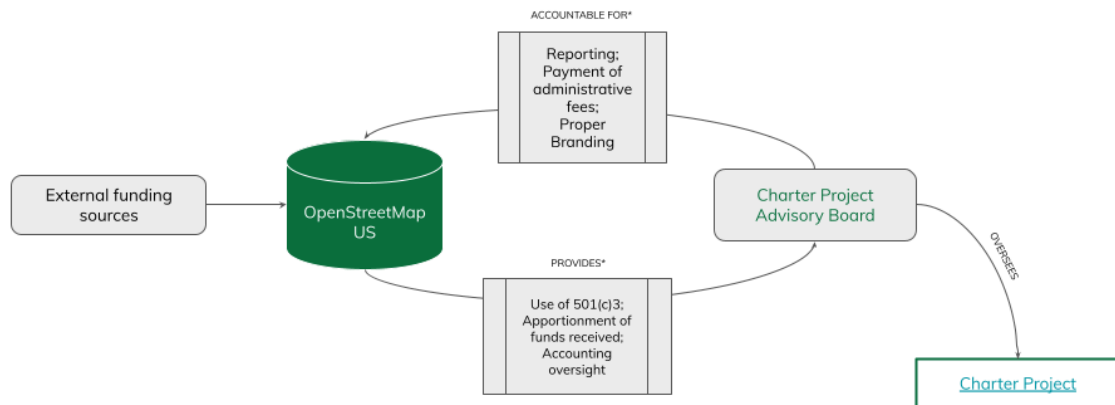
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[1] If your project or idea does not qualify, OpenStreetMap US may have other opportunities for funding and/or support. Please reach out to team@openstreetmap.us

2. Charter Project Governance

OpenStreetMap US provides fiscal sponsorship to Charter Projects, while management and fundraising for the project remains with project maintainers. An Advisory Board (or Steering Committee) of project maintainers is required to oversee the project and serve as a point of contact for OpenStreetMap US. This advisory board is accountable for meeting Charter Project obligations such as reporting and fees.

Drafted & Current as of: June 9, 2022

ACCOUNTABLE FOR*

Reporting;
Payment of
administrative
fees;
Proper
Branding

External funding
sources

OpenStreetMap
US

Charter Project
Advisory Board

OVERSEES

PROVIDES*

Use of 501(c)3;
Apportionment of
funds received;
Accounting
oversight

Charter Project

*Not exhaustive of all responsibilities and obligations

Governance diagram for Charter Projects. Linked to living document.

2.1 Responsibilities

The following table provides an overview of the responsibilities outlined in the agreement for Charter Projects. The table does NOT cover all aspects of the legal agreement, but is intended to provide a simplified overview of responsibilities. The full legal document can be found [here](#).

	OpenStreetMap US	Charter Entity
Fundraising	Approves all grant proposals and solicitations	Responsible for raising any necessary funds for project maintenance & development
Donations	Accepts, processes, and acknowledges contributions made to directly support project	
Code of Conduct & Conflict of		Must abide by OSM US Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest

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Interest		policies
Accounting	Provide accounting services; separately accounting for all funds received and expended for the project.	
Grants	Co-signs all grant agreements.	Ensures compliance terms of grant application & reporting
Contracts	Approve, and co-sign, all contracts or agreements over $2,500.	Negotiate and fulfill contractual obligations
Financial Reserves		Responsible for ensuring financial reserves of 2 months for project liabilities
Hiring	Approves any hiring of employees or independent contractors for project; serves as hiring entity.	Leads hiring process and decision making
Volunteers		Ensure all volunteers abide by the organization's Code of Conduct.
Insurance	Responsible for general liability and applicable insurance	Provides scope of insurance or liability needs
Banking	Maintains all banking activities	
Branding		Identify as "[name of project], a Charter Project of OpenStreetMap US." on all branding & external communications.
Reporting		Submit annual report covering programmatic activities, fiscal management, and future plans for the project, including successes, challenges, and any planned changes.

2.2 Sponsorship Fees

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The following table provides an overview of the fees outlined in the agreement for Charter Projects. The table does NOT cover all aspects of the legal agreement, but is intended to provide a simplified overview of sponsorship fees. The full legal document can be found here.

Administrative fee	OpenStreetMap US is entitled to:
	● 13% of:
	   ○ all funds received by Sponsor for the purposes of the project, regardless of source, and
	   ○ the value of all noncash items or assets received by Sponsor for the purposes of the project
	● 15% of grant funds that involve government or public-agency funds
	● Increase the administrative fee for any grant over $250,000
	
	OpenStreetMap US will charge all charter projects a minimum of $2,000 per year in administrative fees.