

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS  
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/01/2015 02:42 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	80
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity</b>		
1. CPP 1	1	1
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 2	2	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	3
<b>Total</b>	103	83

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - i3 Validation Panel - 3: 84.411B

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project addresses a challenge for which there is a national need for solutions that are better than the solutions currently available.

#### Strengths:

(1)The significance of the plan is the implementation of new strategies that are different from existing strategies, to help provide a solution to the college and career readiness gap for low-income students, which determines the significance of the project. The wrap-around model includes the best practices in high school internship programs, training in college and career skills, professional work experience, mentoring, and alumni support. Through a comprehensive approach, the plan has developed new strategies for expansion that focuses on these components, all have measurable impacts on the youth, addresses workforce readiness, and produces better outcomes for the students. (pgs. 6-8)

(2) The applicant has successfully replicated its success to prepare more than 2,000 underserved youth for college and career in a variety of settings, regions, adapting to unique conditions in each local environment. The model has been replicated in four distinct geographical areas and five school districts and plans an expansion to another environment with grant funding. The plan indicates that the replication of the project model must maintain a high level of standardizations which is necessary to preserve the integrity and the benefits of the model. (pgs. 9-10)

(3) It is the intention of the project to integrate interrelated strategies to address the gaps and barriers faced by the low-income high school students, such as most are living in poverty, large numbers are failing and threatening to dropout, lack of employment opportunities, and failure to attend post-educational institutions. (pgs. 1, 4) The plan includes comparable percentages that identifies barriers faced by the at-risk students and validates that there is a national need for solutions of these challenges to be addressed by the proposed project. (pgs. 10-12)

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

**(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

**(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.**

**(3) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The proposal details project interventions and supports that validates that through them, the targeted youth are more likely to become self-sufficient adults, earn a livable wage, develop employable skills, and productively contribute to society. The project focuses around research based strategies, which are a part of a successful and proven program, beginning with recruitment at LEAs for low-income students who do not plan for college or a career and are in need and will benefit from the program. The students will then attend a 6-week, unpaid workforce readiness training under the supervision of a program coordinator; receives comprehensive supports, including a stipend, which is needed to succeed at work, school and home. The applicant indicates that recruiting is a very careful and selective process, matching intern sponsorships to accommodate all students and the demand for the program always exceeds the number of available internships. (pgs. 12-13)

(2) Successful scaling and expansion of the HSIP with grant funds is dependent on three critical factors which are detailed in the plan. The removal of barriers that will enable the project to deliver and expand quality levels of service to eligible student are: corporate partners to employ and mentor the students in a professional setting; internal capacity to expand to a new site; and a population of students who are on track for graduation with flexible schedules allowing internship participation. The plan indicates that i3 funding will enable scaling and expansion to substantially increase the program size to servicing a total of 3,480 youth over the course of the grant period. (pgs. 14-17)

(3) The applicant is committed to sharing what has been learned about successful implementation of life-changing intervention for the nation's youth. This is demonstrated from participation in three nationally prominent events where their findings are disseminated to an array of stakeholders. The plan also describes other broad dissemination strategies that includes assessments and evaluation reports on mechanisms that addresses challenges of national needed solutions; public policymaking; program development; implementation and baseline projections; policy briefs; fact sheets; and critical findings, which all can be used for informing wide key audiences. (pgs. 17-19)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan**

**1. In determining the quality of the project design and management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

**(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice)**

during the project period.

**(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The goals, objectives and anticipated outcomes are clearly specified and outlined in the plan including activities designed to encourage scaling, replication and learning. The expected outcomes allow for program assessments, performance measurements, evaluation methods and the assurances that each is being completed successfully. The project's implementation of the program structure, successful recruitment of student, corporate partnerships and identifying improvements are direct impacts for effectiveness of the program model. (pgs. 29-21)

(2) The management plan for the project includes project objectives with specific activities for achieving them; timeframes for accomplishing project activities within budget; milestones which are defined and the personnel responsibility for accomplishing each activity is identified. The ongoing data-gathering procedures is in place to ensure feedback throughout the grant period. The contributions of each project partner, includes funding and numerous extensive services are expected to impact and assure the success of the participants. The collaboration of the partners seems to bring into the program a resource base to assist in achieving the goals and objectives of the project. The key personnel have adequate qualifications, education, skills and experiences to manage, oversee and ensure the coordination of resources needed to support this project and the targeted participants. All of these efforts are expected to continue building the framework to ensure all facets of the program services and activities offered to the participants will be promoted and successful. (pgs. 23-25)

(3) The plan provides strategic components for financial contributions ensuring available funds to be used for delivery of services; scaling efforts; corporate sponsorships; new office staff; intern subsidies; successful implementation; and sustainability of the sources to operate project. This project is embedded within an established program and the expansion is expected to increase the possibility of success for the project and its targeted participants, provided with the project funding for the capacity building at both the national and local levels. (pgs. 25-26)

(4) The design of the management plan is guided by the logic model that identifies five key indicators for performance measures of student performance and impact; action plans for short-term and long-term improvements; initial baseline assessment to gauge growth; evaluation; data collection and analysis. The plan includes these important sources, along with the RCT (evaluation report) being conducted, for feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (pgs. 27-28)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 35**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project s effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.**

**(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.**

**(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including,**

where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

Not applicable

**Weaknesses:**

Not applicable

**Reader's Score:**      0

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity (zero or 1 point)**

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

(a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.

(b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

(c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide

(1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;

(2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;

(3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;

(4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost effective approach; and

(5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

**Strengths:**

Applicant details comprehensive approaches to lower cost effectiveness and productivity that are proven in helping effectively low-income and minority youth to succeed in high school and proceed to post-secondary education and career awareness.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score:** 1

**Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices****1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices (zero or 2 points)**

**Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:**

**(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.**

**(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.**

**(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.**

**(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant along with project partners has demonstrated a reform agenda that includes plans for increasing graduation rates, improved means for preparing students to enter college and training for entering the workforce. The agenda includes providing hands-on-job experience through professional internships, a rigorous curriculum linking work experience with classroom training, and earning CTE credits towards graduation, which all aligns with the education reform agenda and can be used to promote broad adoption of these practices.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score:** 2

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/01/2015 02:42 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/01/2015 02:23 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

**Reader #5:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	80
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity</b>		
1. CPP 1	1	1
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 2	2	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	3
<b>Total</b>	103	83

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - i3 Validation Panel - 3: 84.411B

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project addresses a challenge for which there is a national need for solutions that are better than the solutions currently available.

#### Strengths:

1.

The applicant presents a viable project that will target low-income high school seniors for intensive support that combines professional, paid internships; daily mentoring from an adult professional; case management by a staff member; weekly trainings focused on college and career skills; and alumni support. The approach has proven to be successful at helping at-risk succeed as demonstrated by data from the implementation of the project in other settings. Data show that 100% of project participants graduate high school, and 86% of last year's participants enrolled in post-secondary education, compared with 63% of high school graduates nationwide. T (Abstract and pgs. 1- 2)

2.

The applicant demonstrates the model is replicable in other settings. The applicant intends to bring the project model to scale in its current four region including Washington, DC; Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; and Northern Virginia; and intends to expand the model to an additional region. The applicant has gained knowledge on how to successfully replicate the program model from lessons learned in earlier efforts to expand the model. . (pgs. 9-11) Replication of the program in four distinct geographical areas and five school districts has proven that the program can be flexible while maintaining program quality and fidelity. The applicant indicates there is demand for program replication in new regions, as several school systems have approached the applicant to discuss replication. This is strong demonstration of the model's potential for replication. (pgs. 12-13)

3.

The proposed project has potential to address a national need for services. The proposed project is a response to address the national college and career readiness gap, especially among low-income and minority youth that is clearly documented by data. This skills gap disproportionately affects some of the country's most vulnerable youth, including young people of color and those in low-income families. Since its inception, the project model has helped provide a solution to the college- and career-readiness gap for low-income students. The project model brings together the best practices in high school internships and college- and career-readiness programs into a unique wrap-around model that includes: professional work experience and mentoring, individualized case management, training in college and career skills, and alumni support. The applicant draws its structure from a combination of well-researched best practices. For example, research has demonstrated that mentoring programs, paid internship programs, workforce skills training programs and programs with case management all had measurable impacts on youth success. (pgs 4-7, and 10-12) The project model answers the call to action for better solutions to engage students in their educational experiences.

**Weaknesses:**

1.  
No weaknesses noted.
2.  
No weaknesses noted.
3.  
No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale**

**1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

**(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.**

**(3) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Strengths:**

1.  
The applicant demonstrates there is a demand for the strategy to be employed by the project. For example, the applicant works exclusively in high-poverty high schools in which the majority of students meet federal poverty guidelines. All students who are recruited into the program are eligible to attend pre-work training, a 6-week series of unpaid workshops to prepare them for success in the professional world. Students are recruited to the program carefully, with only limited numbers invited into the program. There are annual waiting lists of 10-30 students in each region. This demonstrates demand for the program. It is also clear from the LEA partner letters in the Appendix that the program could serve far higher numbers of students, as the demand for the program always exceeds the number of available internships. In addition to the unmet demand in the current four project regions, there is demand for program replication in new regions. Several school systems have approached the applicant to discuss replication. (pgs. 12-13)

2.  
The applicant presents a clear description of barriers that have prevented past efforts reaching the level of scale for the project design. To successfully expand and replicate the program while maintaining program integrity, three critical factors must be present: corporate partners to employ and mentor the students in a professional setting, the applicant's internal capacity to deliver an expanded level of service at the same standard of quality; and a population of eligible students who are on-track for graduation and have a flexible academic schedule that will allow them to participate in the internship for approximately half the workday. For example, in order to meet demand for the program model, the most critical factor is the presence of corporate partners willing to sponsor and mentor the interns. The applicant must be able to recruit a sufficient number of employers to host and pay for the student employees. The applicant currently requests a contribution in the amount of \$12,500 from corporate job partners to cover the costs of intern wages and activities, direct case management by Program Coordinators, and program quality control oversight by directors. This is considered to be a huge barrier. The applicant will use project funds to cover intern salaries and other sponsorship costs as a pilot effort to build connections with STEM companies or place interns in jobs with a STEM focus. STEM is a critical growth area to

connect youth to strong career opportunities. The applicant projects that a temporary investment in program expansion using i3 funds to sponsor additional students in each region will lead to long-term gains in program growth and sustainability as the businesses come to recognize the value of their young employees. (pgs. 12-14) The applicant intends to increase the program size by 84% from the 2014/15 baseline of 371 to the 2020/21 goal of 685 students, serving a total of 3,480 youth over the course of the i3 grant period.

3.

The applicant describes strong and innovative methods to disseminate project information. The applicant describes a strong commitment to sharing what it learns about successful implementation of the proposed intervention. For example, to share information. The applicant hosted or participated recently in three major events: an applicant hosted an event with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation on the project. The applicant will widely disseminate findings from its current randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluation, and the work proposed under the i3 grant, and the associated randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluation, by collaborating with its evaluation partner to reach a broad array of stakeholders. Other methods of dissemination will include working with the project partner's Communications Office, which manages a website that receives millions of visitors each year. The project's Evaluation team will use the web to engage readers and enter into public policy and program development conversations. Planned products include three research reports on the program's implementation and impacts: implementation and baseline, interim, and final. (pgs. 17-18) The project partner will complete a peer-reviewed journal article to ensure findings are widely distributed to the research community.

**Weaknesses:**

1.

No weaknesses noted.

2.

No weaknesses noted.

3.

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan**

**In determining the quality of the project design and management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

**(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period.**

**(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

1.

The applicant outlines goals, strategies, and measurable objectives to meet goals for the project. The proposed goals and objectives are part of the applicant's strategic plan. A Logic Model illustrates that project activities (pre-work training, professional internship, hard and soft skill-building, coaching, and alumni service) lead to short-term outcomes, including skill-set growth, high school graduation, post-secondary readiness and college enrollment or employment. The short-term outcomes and the youth's enduring connections to the program and resources then lead to the long-term outcome of economic self-sufficiency. Goals for the project are to funds are to operate high-quality, scaled program in DC, Baltimore, Chicago and Northern Virginia; expand the program to one new region while maintaining program fidelity; and 3) demonstrate the impact of expanded programming on high school graduation, college enrollment rates and college completion in all of UA's regions (four existing and one new). (pgs. 19-23, and the Appendix)

2.

The applicant presents a management plan that is sufficient to guide staff in implementing the project. A clearly defined work plan and timeline is provided that aligns with project goals and strategies. Major project tasks are specified and the project years of occurrence. A senior leadership team will comprise the project management structure for the proposed program, and additional staff will be hired to support the project. For example, the Chief Operating Officer, will play a key role in replication efforts, manage external partnerships and oversee the strategic planning process and regional executive directors. The Chief Program Officer will run the day-to-day operations of programs across four cities, and the Chief Administrative Officer will oversee national operations and serves as a point of contact for contractors, ensuring compliance government standards. Other staff positions important to the proposed project include the Replication Director (to be hired using i3 funds), who will assist with site selection and manage preparation for program expansion. (pgs. 19-24)

3.

The applicant outlines a clear multi-year financial an operating model for the project. The project is supported by corporate partner contributions. The strategic plan includes growing its corporate and other sponsorship. For example, the cost to an employer is a flat \$12,500 per intern. This includes \$7,500 per student in potential wages and FICA and also covers the applicant's case management (Program Coordinator salaries) as well as a portion of the applicant's local and national program staff and overhead. The scaling effort will require adding a few staff positions. The program model is designed so that local offices are fully supported by the local corporate partners and philanthropy once they reach scale. Scale is critical to the organization's financial sustainability. The strategic plan assumes that as the HSIP grows, the cost per student will decrease as the administrative and program staff costs are shared across more program sites. As outlined the model is clear and is adequate to support the project. The i3 grant will serve as seed funds for both intern salaries and UA staff and overhead costs until the full corporate sponsorships are attained. (pgs. 25-26)

4.

The applicant presents strategies that are appropriate for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the project, allowing the applicant to make adjustments as needed to meet participant needs. The project will rely on a solid tool to gain feedback on the project. The evaluation team generates a performance scorecard, highlighting five key indicators, that is distributed to the entire staff monthly. This scorecard is the basis for monthly progress check-ins in each region and at the national level. The applicant has also developed its own assessment to gauge growth in professional skills, assessing progress three times yearly after an initial baseline assessment. The assessment tests a number of soft skills that have been shown by research to increase wages, employability, and educational attainment. has developed its own assessment to gauge growth in professional skills, assessing progress three times yearly after an initial baseline assessment. The random control trial evaluation effort will also provide feedback on the project. (pgs. 27-28)

**Weaknesses:**

1.

No weaknesses noted.

2.  
No weaknesses noted.

3.  
No weaknesses noted.

4.  
No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 35**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project s effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.**

**(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.**

**(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.**

**(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.**

**(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.**

**(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

### **Priority Questions**

#### **Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity (zero or 1 point)**

**Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:**

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.**
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**

**Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**An application addressing this priority must provide**

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;**
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;**
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;**
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost effective approach; and**
- (5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant meets Competitive Preference Priority 1. The applicant has identified cost-effective strategies that sufficiently allows it to manage and deliver the program while maintaining high standards. Through a centralized organizational structure, the applicant will reduce administrative duplication and provide economies of scale. Administrative, human resources, IT, accounting and other support functions are centralized at the National Office in and serve all of the regions. This structure is an appropriate approach that benefits the financial health of an organization. Centralized functions and staff will provide necessary supports, resulting in a decreased cost per student. For example, with 371 youth in the project this year, the total cost per intern is \$18,400, including \$7,000 for intern wages. However, by 2018/2019, when the applicant serves 635 youth across 5 regions the total cost per intern will be \$15,900, representing a 14% decrease in program costs. Additionally, the applicant plans operating at scale in the 6th city (expected to be in 2022/23). The applicant provides a projection that the per-intern cost will again drop to \$15,900 or less, as the national staffing cost is shared across six regions.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 1**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices (zero or 2 points)**

**Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:**

- (a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice),**

and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

**(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.**

**(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.**

**(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant meets Competitive Preference Priority 2. The aim of the project is to target low-income high school seniors for intensive support that combines professional, paid internships; daily mentoring from an adult professional; case management by a dedicated UA staff member; weekly trainings focused on college and career skills; and alumni support. The HSIP's unique comprehensive approach is effective at helping at-risk youth succeed. The applicant is committed to discovering and replicating effective practices as demonstrated in effort to replicate the project and disseminate project information. The applicant also values external evaluation and invested in a randomized controlled trial (RCT) in partnership with Urban Institute. The RCT controls for all data points, including school district, neighborhood, and demographics. The applicant intends to conduct a second RCT to document and validate program changes made in response to the interim findings of the first RCT, extend the RCT to Chicago, Northern Virginia and an additional replication site, and expand the range of the evaluation to capture data about college graduation and workforce entry rates.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/01/2015 02:23 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/01/2015 02:28 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	0
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	13
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity</b>		
1. CPP 1	1	0
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 2	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	0
<b>Total</b>	103	13

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - i3 Validation Panel - 3: 84.411B

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project addresses a challenge for which there is a national need for solutions that are better than the solutions currently available.

#### Strengths:

NA

#### Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

(3) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

#### Strengths:

NA

#### Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the project design and management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period.

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan includes both an experimental impact study and an implementation study. Project goals include specific measurable outcomes (pages 22-23). The impact study will be conducted using a randomized control trial which meets WCC standards without reservations and will include two cohorts in order to ensure a sufficient number of students for treatment and control groups. The added sites for program activities will provide data needed to assess differential impacts for diverse settings and diverse student groups (page 29). The proposal includes four specific research questions, three of which are relevant to the proposed project. These three questions address impacts for different cohorts and locations, improved outcomes and effects on program outcomes (e.g., soft skill development). The impact study will employ an intent-to-treat strategy to compare treatment and control groups and will include methodology to correct for possible selection bias. The plan includes details about the number of anticipated students needed for the randomized control trial. The independent evaluator will also conduct follow-up surveys to capture additional student data (page 30). The evaluation conducted by the independent external evaluator is supplemented by baseline and subsequent skill-set evaluations of student interns to be conducted by the project proposer (page 8) which are used to monitor students' progress. The project proposer will also conduct separate internal impact and implementation studies (page 27).

**Weaknesses:**

The first research question, on long-term impacts, is a carry-over from a previous randomized control trial; it does not address the long-term impacts for students who would participate in programs funded by the expansion of activities to be funded by this project. The project evaluation does not indicate a specific data analysis method that will be used for the impact study. The proposal also does not include details about the minimum detectable effect size. The portion of the proposed budget allocated for project evaluation plan is high (20%), particularly considering the level of in-house evaluation activities conducted by the project proposer. It is also not clear how much of the data to be used for the impact and implementation studies by the independent reviewer will be provided by the project proposer; one of the primary sources of baseline data will come directly from Urban Alliance and the follow-up data comes from the NSC Student Tracker that is monitored by Urban Alliance. .

**Reader's Score: 13**

**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity****1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity (zero or 1 point)**

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.**
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**

**Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**An application addressing this priority must provide**

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;**
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;**
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;**

(4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost effective approach; and

(5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

### **Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

#### **1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices (zero or 2 points)**

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/01/2015 02:28 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2015 09:48 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

**Reader #4:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	33
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	78
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity</b>		
1. CPP 1	1	1
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 2	2	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	3
<b>Total</b>	103	81

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - i3 Validation Panel - 3: 84.411B

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project addresses a challenge for which there is a national need for solutions that are better than the solutions currently available.

#### Strengths:

The project provides critical skills needed for students to enter into a career or postsecondary institution. Schools who serve high-need populations may lack academic and counseling support, school-to-work readiness, job placement, mentoring after high school completion, and paid internships. Support may be limited such as school-to-work courses that may be a semester long, one-day job shadowing opportunities, dual-enrollment for selected students or minimal mentoring opportunities. The project serves as a high school redesign model for offer paid internships to ensure job placement, college and career for disadvantaged or high-need populations.

Replicability is established as the project offer services to urban school districts in various states.

The project works with industry and corporations in building a qualified and productive workforce.

#### Weaknesses:

None reported.

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant' s capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

(3) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

**Strengths:**

The project meets the demand of providing solutions to prevent high school dropouts, produce qualified students to enter the workforce and increase postsecondary enrollment. The project prevents barriers affecting high-need students such as poor attendance, low grades, no academic or mentoring support, economic struggles.

The project seeks a portion of grant funds to continue paid internship opportunities due to lack of supply of employment opportunities with partnering business and corporations. The project's training will be redirected to STEM training for an increased job outlook for interns. The project strategy will be met to scale by training students for careers in today's workforce, where employers seek qualified individuals to fill STEM jobs.

Students must apply for the internship program, and upon acceptance, participate in unpaid training prior to internships. Internship completion yield significant results a model for dissemination and replicability.

Dissemination included website resources, journal articles, conferences and social media to reach educational policyholders, research and local community organizations.

**Weaknesses:**

None reported.

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan****1. In determining the quality of the project design and management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

**(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period.**

**(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The project design is centered on identifying corporate and industry stakeholders for internship opportunities and potential job placement. The design is a practical solution to increasing our workforce with qualified individuals. The project design targets high-need students who need additional training to become qualified and productive employees. In transition, interns may need temporary financial assistance to become part of the workforce.

The project will seek businesses and corporations to sponsor interns as employment prospects. In addition, the project plans to spread its initiative in other districts to identify new interns who need support. The project has a clear and detailed timeline to meet the grant goals and objectives.

The project has a qualified staff to adequately meet timelines, has a long standing partnership with school districts, business, corporations, postsecondary institutions and industry in accomplished desired tasks. A replication director will be hired for project expansion.

**Weaknesses:**

Continuous improvement plan, or flexible strategies should be included to address attrition in the program.

**Reader's Score:** 33

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score:** 0

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity**

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity (zero or 1 point)

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

(a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.

(b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

**(c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**

**Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**An application addressing this priority must provide**

**(1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;**

**(2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;**

**(3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;**

**(4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost effective approach; and**

**(5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.**

**Strengths:**

The budget is cost-effective under the direct and contractual labor categories, with funds dedicated to student services upon internship completion. The project is able to offer academic and mentoring support, collaborate with school districts located in several states and build industry partnerships by working in a central location.

**Weaknesses:**

None reported.

**Reader's Score: 1**

### **Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

#### **1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices (zero or 2 points)**

**Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:**

**(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.**

**(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.**

**(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.**

**(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.**

**Strengths:**

The project serves as an intermediary between schools, students and industry. Such outreach initiatives in building a productive workforce should be the new direction of workforce development for disadvantaged and high-need populations. The project is a fully-developed community partnership that is essential for high school redesign.

**Weaknesses:**

None reported.

**Reader's Score:**     **2**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   09/02/2015 09:48 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/30/2015 06:11 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	0
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	14
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity</b>		
1. CPP 1	1	0
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 2	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	0
<b>Total</b>	103	14

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - i3 Validation Panel - 3: 84.411B

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Urban Alliance Foundation, Inc. (U411B150036)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project addresses a challenge for which there is a national need for solutions that are better than the solutions currently available.

#### Strengths:

n/a

#### Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

(3) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

#### Strengths:

n/a

#### Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the project design and management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period.

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan meets WWC standards likely w/o reservations assuming attrition will not play a factor (and previous study didn't have this as a problem).

The research questions are well defined and the RCT will address them. Questions 1-3 are more defined than #4 regarding soft skill development.

Pg 28 describes how this RCT will build on the previous one and will see if the results to date are replicable across different settings.

The proposal describes a well-balanced combination of an experimental impact study as well as an implementation study.

The intent-to-treat plan (pg 31) is good.

The Implementation plan is appropriate and the proposed sample size based on attrition estimates is well documented

There is a plan in place for an implementation study. For those most part, the evaluation plan articulates the key components and outcomes of the project.

The evaluator is already doing their other RCT and is thus familiar with the project. The proposal includes previous report that seems to have a well-developed and implemented research design.

**Weaknesses:**

The organization is already doing an RCT (pg 16). While the current project would be at larger scale, they are only increasing from 371 to 685 students -- as such it is unclear how much more this will tell us.

Pg 29 references how in the newer sites there are higher percentages of youth that are not legal citizens. This statistic regarding this demographic will likely effect the ability to measure employment data/unemployment insurance wage records and/or collect data from the National Student Clearinghouse.

The proposal would have benefited from clearer explanation of ties b/w hard and soft skill development (per page 28).

While Pg 28 describes how this RCT will build on the previous one and will see if the results to date are replicable across different settings, unknown is whether there are any a priori hypotheses regarding how the program may have a differential impact for one group over another, differential effects (i.e. whether they believe it will more positively impact a certain subgroup than another).

For the randomization, per page 29, the proposal states that students will be randomized to treatment or not, but not whether all students would have expressed an initial interest in the UA program. This is a point in need of clarification as it effects the interpretation of findings ultimately.

There is a lot of sensitive information being collected here. It begs the question of whether collection of such data would require active student assent/parent consent. More information is needed to determine whether this evaluation plan would constitute non-exempt research status.

While the proposal states that it will explore whether results differ by settings, it does not explain how this will be done from an analytic perspective. Aside from explaining that this is an ITT design, little detail is given about the specific variables under consideration

The minimum detectable effect size is not listed. Further, the proposal would have benefited from more detail regarding the evaluation plan with respect to mediators/moderators under exploration.

The implementation study does not set measureable thresholds for acceptable levels of fidelity/implementation.

It appears that the evaluation budget is 19% as that is how much is listed in the consultant line. More detail is needed to determine whether such a high budget is appropriate.

**Reader's Score: 14**

### **Priority Questions**

#### **Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity**

##### **1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity (zero or 1 point)**

**Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:**

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.**
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**

**Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**An application addressing this priority must provide**

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;**
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;**
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;**
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost effective approach; and**
- (5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.**

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 0**

#### **Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

##### **1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices (zero or 2 points)**

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   08/30/2015 06:11 PM