Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Neighborhood Centers Inc. -- ,Community-Based Initiatives (U215P100148)
Reader #1:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	15
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Sub Total	100	95
Total	100	95

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Neighborhood Centers Inc. -- ,Community-Based Initiatives (U215P100148)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1.a) **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.**
  b) **In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-**
    i) **The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators;**
    ii) **The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described; and**
    iii) **The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project.**

  Strengths:

  The applicant clearly defined geographic boundaries using census data, a map, a description of local boundaries, actual miles, and attendance zones (p. 2).

  The applicant draws upon indicators provided by the secretary to identify the targeted area as being one of high-needs. The following data was provided: 40% of children under 18 live in poverty. The average family income in the targeted area is $12,727. One half of adults do not have high school diplomas. There is a high immigrant population with 85% of residents speaking a language other than English. The community has the highest juvenile delinquency rate in the state. Teen pregnancy rates are at 23% compared to the city-wide rate of 17% (p. 2).

  The applicant established that targeted schools are high needs schools: 92% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. The local high school is ranked at 133 out of 140 schools statewide. The student mobility rate is 33% overall and 42% among refugee students compared to a 22% rate city-wide. 78% of students attending the local district are Hispanic, 14% are African American, 5% are Asian American and the remaining 4% are European American (pp. 2).

  The applicant provided a solid review of existing needs and services based upon fairly recent data, but proposes to extend the survey during planning phase. A number of existing services have been identified, as well as the understanding that there are barriers which prevent residents from accessing existing services, such as transportation and lack of awareness. There were some gaps identified as well, including the need for quality pre-k programs and after school services (p. 5-6).

  Weaknesses:

  No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1.a) **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.**
  b) **In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary**

considers the following factors:

   i) The extent to which the applicant describes how it will plan to build a continuum of solutions designed to significantly improve the academic and family and community support indicators in this notice;

   ii) The extent to which the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;

   iii) The extent to which the applicant describes strategies for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;

   iv) The extent to which the applicant identifies and describes academic and family and community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;

   v) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to work with the Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees; and

   vi) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed project plan which clearly outlines each phase of project implementation and how it will roll out its continuum of solutions for academic and for family and community support (pp. 5 - 22). All solutions proposed are introduced through a process which begins with a review of related research, and ends with a rationale for why a particular solution is being proposed. Research is diverse and includes both quantitative and qualitative reports (p. 6).

The applicant provided a strong plan for turning around schools in the targeted region that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1. Included in the strategy is a plan for recruiting and hiring highly qualified teachers and principals, for restructuring large schools into smaller more personalized school programs, for focusing on reducing suspension rates due to behavioral problems, and for professional development training for teachers and school personnel (pp. 17).

The applicant proposed an extensive data management system which would be developed internally, and which would link existing data systems already adopted by participating agencies. It provides information about some of the systems already in use (i.e. TAAG, ETO and CAN), which were revealed in a recent review of community resources (pp. 17-19).

The applicant acknowledges the importance of working with the national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods and the U.S. Department of Education and discusses how they can link local project evaluations to national data-collection goals (pp. 21-22).

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

   b) In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considersâ

   i) The extent to which the applicant describes proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence;

   ii) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards; and

iii) The extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and
segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs
receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.

Strengths:

The applicant provided strong research (both qualitative and quantitative/empirical
studies) in line with the rationale for proposed strategy or solutions (pp. 5-16).

The applicant is highly likely to achieve academic goals due to specificity of their
school reform plans, and due to the fact that they have included data-based strategies
that have been identified in education literature as being best-practices. The project is
also being developed by competent professionals (pp. 5-16).

The applicant provides a detailed chart to support their narrative outlining their plan to
implement a needs-assessment and segmentation analysis. They propose a comprehensive plan
which builds upon and will incorporate recent studies conducted with community residents,
agencies, schools, and business leaders to assess community needs and resources. Most
studies are agency specific (pp. 18-21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the project personnel who will carry out the
proposed project.
b) In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the
qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the applicant, including
the project director, and the prior performance of the applicant on efforts similar or
related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.
c) Relevant experience includes the applicantâs experience in and lessons learned byâ
i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
ii) Serving the neighborhood and its residents;
iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;
iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to
achieve results; and
v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

Strengths:

The proposed project management team has a long-term relationship with the community, and
the broad expertise needed for project implementation. The team also has personnel who are
representative of the community served (i.e., Latino, bilingual) (pp. 22-27).

The applicant demonstrates data management expertise (pp. 23, 30 - 31).

The applicant proposes to build upon formal and informal relationships developed through
community efforts at uplift, has broad community support for their work on the project,
and has demonstrated ability to secure and to integrate funds from public and private
sources (pp. 20-23, 39-40).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.
  b) In determining the quality of the management plan of the proposed project, the Secretary considers--
   i) 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;
   ii) The extent to which the memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5 of Absolute Priority 1 describes each partnerâs financial and programmatic commitment; how each partnerâs existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and existing activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and the governance structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood;
   iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of families, school staff, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and
   iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain and âscale upâ the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

  Strengths:

  The applicant presented a detailed management plan with a timeline, clearly defined responsibilities, milestones, indicators and measurable goals which are well aligned. Given the plan provided, the expertise of project -management staff and broad community support, along with other related factors listed below, it appears very likely that the plan would be implemented within the time-line and budget included (pp. 34-37).

  The applicant provided MOUs which for the most part meet requirements set out by the Secretary in paragraph 4 of Absolute Priority 1 (Appendix).

  The applicant provided a focused outreach and community engagement strategy which ensures broad stake-holder input and involvement in the planning process, as well as opportunities for continual input throughout the project. This ensures that a diversity of perspectives will be included in planning, operations and evaluation processes (pp. 37).

  The applicant has identified a variety of funding sources to support the project when Promise Neighborhood grant funds end. Most are federal funds; however, they also include a list of pro-bono services, and private and foundation funding, which has been ear-marked for the program so far (p. 38).

  Weaknesses:

  While the applicant identifies that it has secured a significant amount of funds for its organization, and that they know well-connected persons who are project supporters who will assist in identifying and securing additional funds, they did not present a plan for further fund development beyond matching funds already earmarked (p. 37).

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Significance

1.a) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
  b) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considersâ
   i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change or

improvement;

   ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population;

   iii) 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; and

   iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of settings.

  Strengths:

The applicant presented a very strong project design and management plan which will be implemented by competent staff that has a relationship with the targeted community. Given the level of planning and coordination which has taken place, along with activities proposed for the project, there is a high likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change and improvement. It is also highly likely to build local capacity to improve or to expand services that address the needs of the population, as this is the main goal of the proposal (pp. 5-22).

The applicant provides a recommendation and plan for scale-up and replication in neighboring communities and for others in the state with like characteristics and needs. This increases the potential to apply the model in a variety of settings (pp. 35-42).

  Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/16/10 8:48 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Neighborhood Centers Inc. -- ,Community-Based Initiatives (U215P100148)
Reader #2: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1.Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1.Project Design	20	20
Quality of Project Services		
1.Project Services	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1.Project Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1.Management Plan	20	19
Significance		
1.Significance	10	10
Sub Total	100	99
Total	100	99

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Neighborhood Centers Inc. -- ,Community-Based Initiatives (U215P100148)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1.a) **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.**
   b) **In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-**
      i) **The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators;**
      ii) **The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described; and**
      iii) **The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project.**

Strengths:

Clear information was given on the geographical boundaries of the Glufton Promise Neighborhoods, including a large map that showed the area as noted on page 2. Statistics on the neighborhood cited include: 1) large percent who are foreign born (page 3), 2) high number of racial and ethnic groups (page 2), 3) population density (page 2), 4) large number for who English is a second language (page 3), 5) adult population without a high school diploma which is 48% (page 3), 6) per capita income of $12,727 (page 3), 7) household mobility rate of 79% (page 3), 8) teen birth rate of 23% (page 3), 9) childhood immunization rate of only 68% (page 3), 10) violent crime rate of 15.3 per 1,000 (page 3), 11) student mobility rate of 35% (page 3). Statistics were also reported specifically for Lee High School also starting on page 3, which includes student mobility rate of 42%, 85% speak another language other than English primarily and 42% have limited English proficiency (LEP). Lee High School has made strides in academics as measured by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, including 60% increase in students passing Reading/Language Arts, 300%, in math, 75% in social studies, and 300% in science. However, they have not met AYP and only have a graduation rate of 42%. A variety of other statistics are given that support the urgent academic need on page 4. The narrative also addresses the gaps in services, infrastructure and opportunities starting on page 4. The applicant makes a list of existing service opportunities including: health/medical care, prenatal care, etc. on page 4, but also notes considerable barriers including transportation, lack of awareness of services, confusing eligibility requirements, etc. which all limit access for some individuals as noted on page 5. Other gaps noted on page 5 include: affordable youth and after school services, mental health services, academic and career guidance, etc.
Overall, the narrative describes in convincing detail the importance of this project in meeting community needs.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted. Footnoting of references might have been helpful, but the sources were largely noted as part of text and thus points were not subtracted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1.a) **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.**
   b) **In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary**

considers the following factors:

   i) The extent to which the applicant describes how it will plan to build a continuum of solutions designed to significantly improve the academic and family and community support indicators in this notice;

   ii) The extent to which the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;

   iii) The extent to which the applicant describes strategies for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;

   iv) The extent to which the applicant identifies and describes academic and family and community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;

   v) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to work with the Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees; and

   vi) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Strengths:

The applicant did a great job of describing in a joint section for Project Design and Project Services the responses to the required items. Specifically the narrative relays a theory of change and the need to develop a "tipping point" and even gives a number to that point, 34,905 persons, starting on page 5. In addition, The narrative provides evidence based research, citing specific studies that are applicable to their planned strategies and services, starting on page 6. Use of comparison groups is noted in many of the studies. The strategies and services tie back to identified community needs as well as the targeted indicators of Promise Neighborhoods and some new indicators added specific to the community. The strategies cited include: 1) school readiness and early childhood programs (page 6), 2) support and sustain effective schools (page 10), 3) increase K-12 achievement in low performing schools (page 11), 4) provide and promote multiple pathways to college and career success (page 13), 5) community centers as hubs for service delivery, cultural events, etc. (page 15), 6) healthy living outcomes (page 16). A wide array of existing and planned expanded programs are referred to that integrate this effort with current endeavors in Glufton. The narrative also describes use of rapid time and longitudinal data on page 17 and possible purchase of software including Social Solutions Efforts to Outcomes. Other software mentioned includes, CAN and TAAG. in the Management Plan and Quality of Project Personnel, the applicant described with more detail the relationship with stakeholders like neighbors and parents. This addresses the criteria noted for involvement of stakeholders. The strategies address all absolute priorities. Information is included regarding coordination and work with the national evaluator.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses. It would have been helpful to include the information about the stakeholders and parents involvement in planning in Section under Project Designs or Services but since it was elsewhere in the application, no points were deducted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.
   b) In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considersâ
   i) The extent to which the applicant describes proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence;
   ii) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead

to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards; and
   iii) The extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.

Strengths:

The applicant cited the research base for each one of the strategies and services that were included in the grant. For instance on page 7, research from the Mathematica Policy Research was noted.   The research indicated that there was a randomly assigned control group used in the study. The study indicates that the Early Head Start students did significantly better on a range of measures than the control group. This is just one example of the research that was cited to support proposed solutions. There is a strong coordination between this effort and existing programs, funded by community, state and federal resources that is evident through out this joint section which addresses both Program Design and Program Services. The commitment to work with a national evaluator and the US Department of Education is also thoroughly addressed in this section on page 25. Sources for data are also included as part of the review of indicators. For instance, they identified a survey for the school and information from Legacy SW Clinic as the sources for students who are receiving behavioral health or mental health assessments or services as reported on page 21. The information provided in the application gives a clear understanding of the project design and services and these are effectively connected to both community needs and also research.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the project personnel who will carry out the proposed project.
  b) In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the applicant, including the project director, and the prior performance of the applicant on efforts similar or related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.
  c) Relevant experience includes the applicantâs experience in and lessons learned byâ
   i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
   ii) Serving the neighborhood and its residents;
   iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;
   iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to achieve results; and
   v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

Strengths:

The program personnel has extensive experience in evaluation, nonprofit management, education, community organizing, social services, youth programs, etc. as noted starting on page 23. The agency also has a very strong, long history of providing a range of services to the neighborhood and to a variety of cities as noted starting on page 27. There also is an understanding to build and maintain a strong relationship with the Glufton neighborhood served as reported starting on page 28 which is crucial to successful involvement in Promise Neighborhoods. The organization has experience implementing many successful, extremely large scale projects as noted in the narrative, staring on page 27 forward. They have integrated funding from private and public streams including working with 500 foundations and building community support (page 31). Formal and informal relationships exist with appropriate partners, Head Start, public schools, government, etc. (page 34). They have a placed based focus as noted on page 32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.
  b) In determining the quality of the management plan of the proposed project, the
  Secretary considers--
    i) 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;
    ii) The extent to which the memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5 of
  Absolute Priority 1 describes each partnerâs financial and programmatic commitment; how
  each partnerâs existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and existing
  activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and the governance
  structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood;
    iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear
  in the operation of the proposed project, including those of families, school staff, the
  business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or
  beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and
    iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends,
  including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain
  and âscale upâ the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

  Strengths:

  The management plan clearly articulates a governance structure and accountability. The
  memorandum of understanding gives information about each agency from which you can gain an
  understanding of theory of change/theory of action and vision. Financial commitments are
  also clearly included. The partners to the agreement including nonprofits, health, charter
  and public school districts, business, United Way, community college, etc., are consistent
  with the programs mentioned in the narrative and offer diversified stakeholders.
  Neighborhood involvement is also noted in the narrative in several places. The commitment
  also includes cash awards from United Way and Aramark as noted in the appendices. In
  addition to the MOU, in-kind commitments were also referred to again in letters as found
  in the appendix.   Ideas for other future grants that might result in school and
  neighborhood improvement are also reported on page 40. A return on investment analysis is
  planned which should influence funders to make further investments on page 41. The agency
  clearly has a history of raising and managing significant dollars as reported on page 39.
  Overall the management plan seemed consistent with both the community needs and the
  project design.

  Weaknesses:

  A little more detail might be noted in the time lines, perhaps denoting additional
  information about developing surveys, process for segmentation analysis, etc.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Significance

1.a) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
  b) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considersâ
    i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change or
  improvement;
    ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to

provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population;
   iii) 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;
and
   iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies,
including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of
settings.

Strengths:

The project as describes clearly will help the organization scale up its intervention with
residents in Glufton neighborhoods. The research cited indicates that the likelihood that
it will improve services appears moderate to strong as noted starting on page 6 and as
also indicated in this section on page 42. The case is made that an infusion of dollars
would allow the agency to build upon existing programs and infrastructure. This is evident
actually throughout the narrative. A list of invitational priorities was addressed on
page 43 which also increases the significance of the project. The project addresses the
fact that the changing demographics in Houston is consistent with where the nation's
demographics will be in the next 20 years which also makes this an important project. The
high number of LEP students is important and makes this project significant to look at in
terms of replication.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

_____

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/13/10 7:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Neighborhood Centers Inc. -- ,Community-Based Initiatives (U215P100148)
Reader #3:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Sub Total	100	100
Total	100	100

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Neighborhood Centers Inc. -- ,Community-Based Initiatives (U215P100148)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1.a) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.
   b) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-
    i) The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as
described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators;
    ii) The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described; and
    iii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or
opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project.

   Strengths:

   Applicant appears to have thorough knowledge of conditions of targeted community and
   provides evidence of severe poverty and other related indicators that suggest a need for
   intervention. Applicant defines geographic area to be targeted by census tracts and
   streets in southwest Houston (p.1) and provides ample demographic data on education
   income, teen birth rates, crime and mobility (p.2). Applicant also provides data on school
   performance by subject and AYP projections of the targeted high school. P.2 Language is
   one of the biggest barriers for the target neighborhood and applicant provides data to
   support these deficiencies. Further, applicant appropriately addresses gaps in services
   and has queried parents to determine more specifically what these gaps are, p. 3-4

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.
   b) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary
   considers the following factors:
    i) The extent to which the applicant describes how it will plan to build a continuum of
   solutions designed to significantly improve the academic and family and community support
   indicators in this notice;
    ii) The extent to which the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to
   develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools
   described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
    iii) The extent to which the applicant describes strategies for using data to manage
   program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;
    iv) The extent to which the applicant identifies and describes academic and family and
   community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;
    v) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to work with the
   Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data
   collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national
   evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of
   specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees; and

vi) **The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.**

Strengths:

Applicant methodically and cogently describes a plan to build a continuum of solutions by outlining 6 strategies that capture education, health, social and other life interventions from cradle to career for its targeted neighborhood. Applicant's plan is backed by research that supports the use of existing local programs that are leading to significant improvements in elementary, middle and high schools that serve the neighborhood. Applicant clearly identifies and enumerates academic and family and community support indicators. Pp. 5-16.

Applicant appears to have a smart plan for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders and measure success by looking for a system that can interface with existing databases rather than re-invent the wheel or offend others by offering a new system at a added costs. The applicant is looking at choosing a tool for capturing longitudinal data as well as share and use data in real time for ongoing program adjustment and improvement. Applicant has commitment to work with national evaluator to ensure consistency with plans for a rigorous national evaluation. Applicant's proposed project is part and parcel to an existing bigger plan for changing the neighborhood and has the support of appropriate community, state and federal resources already at work. (See strategies pp 5-16)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1.a) **The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.**
  b) **In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considersâ**
   i) **The extent to which the applicant describes proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence;**
   ii) **The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards; and**
   iii) **The extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.**

Strengths:

Applicant clearly describes proposed solutions in each of its 6 strategies and supports each with best available evidence. Pp. 5-16 The proposed services appear likely to lead to improvements in student achievement as measured against rigorous academic standards as they are based on programs that incorporate such rigor by design and have proven to have worked in other settings based on the research provided. Applicant plans to hire a local evaluator to ensure that all assessments and meet the appropriate scientific and methodological standards. P. 18

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the project personnel who will carry out the
   proposed project.
   b) In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the
   qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the applicant, including
   the project director, and the prior performance of the applicant on efforts similar or
   related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.
   c) Relevant experience includes the applicantâs experience in and lessons learned byâ
     i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
     ii) Serving the neighborhood and its residents;
     iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;
     iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to
   achieve results; and
     v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

   Strengths:

   Applicant's project personnel are superbly skilled and experienced in this subject area,
   have served the neighborhood and its residents, has worked with the school system, in the
   classroom, and actually created the elementary charter school. P. 24. Applicant's Program
   Director, Ms. Garcia, and others speak fluent Spanish, which is critical for the largely
   Spanish-speaking neighborhood. Applicant's personnel has funding savvy and the ability to
   secure and integrate multiple funding streams from public and private sources as is
   evident in its current funding and staff credentials.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.
   b) In determining the quality of the management plan of the proposed project, the
   Secretary considers--
     i) 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;
     ii) The extent to which the memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5 of
   Absolute Priority 1 describes each partnerâs financial and programmatic commitment; how
   each partnerâs existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and existing
   activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and the governance
   structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood;
     iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear
   in the operation of the proposed project, including those of families, school staff, the
   business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or
   beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and
     iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends,
   including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain
   and âscale upâ the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Strengths:

Applicant's management plan shows sensible hierarchy to carry out responsibilities and to meet timelines and milestones within budget parameters. Organizational chart puts management plan into perspective. Applicant's MOU is well represented with a diversity of partners. That it is preliminary is thoughtful because it allows partners to go back and re-configure or adjust where necessary. There appears a strong likelihood of sustainability and Âscaling up because of the level of commitment and support from partners. Pp. 36-37.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

1.a) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
  b) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considersâ
    i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change or improvement;
    ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population;
    iii) 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; and
    iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of settings.

Strengths:

Applicant presents a sound case for long-term systems change and increased local capacity because of its foundation of existing similar programs, stable and on-going funding streams, and political community support. Applicant is already beginning to implement promising new strategies and has listed many, including Bright Beginnings, Apollo 20 school reform, Digital Assets, and youth career pathways to name a few. P. 41

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

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