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**Lead Agency** – The **Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi Private Foundation** (Elmezzi) is applying to the US Department of Education as the lead agency for a planning grant under the Promise Neighborhoods Program, responding to **Absolute Priority 1, Competitive Priority 4 and Competitive Priority 5**. Elmezzi is requesting a \$500,000 grant which it will match with \$421,000 (\$350,000 cash and \$71,000 in-kind) in Elmezzi resources and \$422,800 in Partner resources for a total match of \$843,800. Elmezzi proposes to use planning grant funds to carry out the activities outlined in this application, build a Promise Neighborhood in a low-income, high-need public housing development in Astoria, Queens that will serve as a model for creating a larger Promise Neighborhood in Western Queens and for public housing nationwide.

**Planning Grant Priority 1 (Absolute) Proposal To Develop a Promise Neighborhood Plan**

**As described in this narrative. Planning Grant Priority 4 (Competitive Preference)**

**Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network.** As described throughout this application, the Planning Year will lead to implementation of a continuum of services from birth to college, along with critical family and community supports. Early childhood educational indicators and measurable goals are well documented in this application. In addition, the high-needs of young children in the target area are well documented. Finally, a number of community providers of early childhood services are partners, as evidenced in the attached MOU. **Planning Grant**

**Priority 5 (Competitive Preference) Quality Internet Connectivity.** In the “Need for Project” section below, a tremendous digital divide is documented. In the program plan the planning process to identify and secure resources to fill the digital divide is specified, along with specific outcomes and associated indicators to measure success. The Digital Divide Partnership which provides free wireless in public housing will offer resources to overcome the digital divide as evidenced in the attached MOU.

**A. Need for project. A (1). Geographically defined service area, level of distress, indicators of need; and A (2). Description of the geographically defined area.** The Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi Private Foundation (Elmezzi), a grant-giving and capacity building (501)(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation based in New York City's borough of Queens, was established in 1996. In 2005, Elmezzi's board voted to focus on supporting and building the capacity of social service organizations in three contiguous zip code areas of northwest Queens (11101, 11102, 11106), which include the communities of Astoria and Long Island City (LIC). To accomplish this goal, Elmezzi created **Zone 126 Promise Neighborhood** (Zone 126 PN). In 2011, Elmezzi began incorporation of Zone 126 PN as a subsidiary whose mission is to work on the assessment, planning, and implementation of a continuum of services for the area. The targeted area is also where Elmezzi's founder, Thomas Elmezzi, grew up in a working class immigrant family.

The initial work of Zone 126 PN consisted of conducting a needs survey of the targeted area, focusing on the residents of three highly distressed public housing developments. Three thousand residents completed a 60-question survey. The resulting comprehensive needs assessment, completed and published in 2011, forms the core rationale for this proposal. Of the three developments surveyed, Astoria Houses showed the most urgent needs, with 37% of residents placing gang violence as the most critical problem in their neighborhood, followed by drug abuse (29%) and families and children (15%).<sup>1</sup> According to the survey, however, better access to educational opportunities was cited as the number one priority.

Based on having the most compelling needs within a highly distressed community, Elmezzi selected Astoria Houses as the initial focus for the Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant, as well as the three public schools primarily attended by Astoria Houses' children. **The 30 block Geographically Defined Service Area will include** Astoria Houses and the 21 square

blocks that adjoin Astoria Houses which includes two of the three targeted public schools, of which IS 126 qualifies as a low-performing, Title 1, currently restructuring school. Area boundaries are the East River on the West, Broadway on the South, 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the East, and 27<sup>th</sup> Ave to the North. Astoria Houses is a geographically isolated public housing development project located at 4-20 Astoria Boulevard, Astoria, NY 11102 on a small 32.3-acre peninsula of Northwest Queens in Community District #1, physically isolated from most shops, businesses, and public transportation. The service area is in NYC Community District #1, NYC Department of Education School District #30, State Assembly District #37, and Congressional District #9.

**Demographics:** Astoria Houses is a cluster of 22 buildings owned and managed by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), with an official count of 3,136 residents living in 1,102 rental apartments, all of whom are considered to be low-income. Among the official 3,136 residents, 1,172 are children under age 18 (37%). Because of extended families and the incidence of families forced to double up in apartments, there also is an “unofficial” count of 6,476 residents, 2,344 of which are children (36%). Fifty-two percent of the children are living below federal poverty levels, and 48% live in homes headed by single mothers. Fifty-five percent are African-American and 35% are Hispanic, with 10% of mixed heritages. Over 18% of residents are foreign-born, half with limited English proficiency. Median income among official residents is \$14,710; if unofficial residents had been surveyed, this figure would be lower still. Unemployment in 2010 was 23%, and 42% of adults surveyed had not completed high school.<sup>2</sup>

**Neighborhood demographics:** The 30 blocks that make up the geographic service area for the project is located within zip code 11102, which was surveyed by Elmezzi within its Zone 126 survey. Zip code 11102 is located in Community District #1. In Queens Community District #1 there are 178,500 residents of which 29,300 are under age 18, with 9,753 under age 5.

Seventy-seven percent of children are born to families of color: 37% Latino/a, 22% Asian, and 19% African-American. Economic and social problems begin at birth: 56% of infants are born into poverty, with Medicaid-funded births.<sup>3</sup> At Astoria Houses, 52% of families with children live below the poverty level.<sup>4</sup> A significant portion of the community is composed of new immigrants: 46.4% of residents and 13.5% of local children are foreign-born, and 27% of local children speak a language other than English at home. Major ethnic groups in 2008 were Puerto Rican, Mexican, Ecuadorian, Dominican, Columbian, Chinese, and Filipino;<sup>5</sup> 16.2% of housing was in poor condition in 2005.<sup>6</sup> In 2009, 81 local families became homeless.<sup>7</sup> Nearly 9,000 CD 1 children ages 5 - 18 had unmet needs for out-of-school-time services in 2005— a factor which contributed to 1,500 juvenile arrests in 2008, of which 381 were for felonies.<sup>8</sup>

**Target schools:** The Zone 126 PN project will partner with the 3 schools most frequently attended by Astoria Houses’ children (2 located within the geographically defined area), as well as with the Superintendent of the LEA, District #30:

- PS 171 Peter G. Van Alst Elementary, a Title 1 school with 19% LEP students;<sup>9</sup>
- IS 126 Albert Shanker Middle School, a Title 1 school currently being re-structured with 20% LEP students, and which had 329 suspensions in 2009/10 among 615 total students;<sup>10</sup>
- William Cullen Bryant High School, a Title 1 Targeted Assistance school currently being re-structured. It was identified by the NYS Department of Education in 2010/11 as a “persistently lowest-achieving school” due to low graduation rates (49% in 2008).<sup>11</sup>

#### **Indicators of Need & Other Relevant Indicators**

**Early Childhood Education:**

- In 2008, 58% of those who sought pre-kindergarten admissions were turned away due to lack of space in the public schools.<sup>12</sup>
- 712 children applied for 298 pre-K public schools slots in 2008; 414 were turned away.<sup>13</sup>
- <5% of Astoria’s poor children receive early childhood care and education from the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS).<sup>14</sup>
- There is a lack of available slots in local Head Start programs.<sup>15</sup>

**Education:**

- The Zone 126 survey found that parents want their children to have opportunities to graduate high school and be gainfully employed.<sup>16</sup>
- At PS 171, only 1.2% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, 0% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders, and 4.6% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders were able to obtain a score of 4 (Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction) on the NY State ELA Exam (2011), judged on a scale of 1-4.<sup>17</sup>
- At Albert Shanker Middle School, 0% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders obtained a 4 in 2011.<sup>18</sup>
- PS 171, although classified as being in good standing, saw a 75% decrease in Math scores in SY 10-11 and a surge in children with beginner-level English speaking abilities.<sup>19</sup>
- At IS 126, 1 in 6 students need ESL programs.<sup>20</sup>
- At IS 126, over 200 students are suspended annually as it undergoes re-structuring.<sup>21</sup>
- The targeted area has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest annual dropout rate in NYC (14% annually).<sup>22</sup>
- The Zone 126 survey shows that 10% of local youth are disconnected from school, 50% of middle-school students observe or experience regular substance abuse at school, and 45% observe or experiences threats or bullying.<sup>23</sup>
- The Zone 126 survey indicated that up to 75% of local third-graders failed the State English Language Arts exam. Results worsen in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, in which up to 78% are failing in ELA and up to 65% are failing in Math. By 8<sup>th</sup> grade, up to 95% fail ELA and 80% fail Math.<sup>24</sup>

**Family:**

- 35% of expectant mothers in LIC/Astoria receive late or no pre-natal care.<sup>25</sup>
- The number of local children in foster care is five times higher than the rate for the borough of Queens and two times higher than the citywide rate for New York City.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2009 1,179 children in Astoria were reported as abused or neglected.<sup>27</sup>
- 71% of women responding to the Zone 126 survey said domestic abuse is a problem.
- In 2007, there were 574 domestic violence arrests in LIC/Astoria.<sup>28</sup>
- Astoria Houses' grandparents are caregivers in 54.9% of homes with children under 18.<sup>29</sup>

**Health:**

- Northwest Queens is the second most uninsured neighborhood in NYC and has extremely limited free healthcare services.<sup>30</sup>
- 55% of CD 1 children are uninsured.<sup>31 32</sup>
- Northwest Queens is in the bottom 10 out of all 42 NYC neighborhoods in disease prevention and access to medical care.<sup>33</sup>
- Astoria Houses is located in NYC's "Asthma Alley" that contains six power plants, engine exhaust from LaGuardia airport, diesel trucks on the Queensboro Bridge, and barges on the East River. As a result, one in every 20 neighborhood adults suffers from asthma.<sup>34</sup>
- 12 out of every 1,000 neighborhood children ages 0 – 3 test with high levels of lead.<sup>35</sup>
- The drug-related death rate in Northwest Queens is higher than in Queens overall.<sup>36</sup>
- In the Zone 126 survey, Astoria Houses residents had the highest intake of fast food and identified "cake, cookies, or donuts" as their primary snack food.<sup>37</sup>
- Of all surveyed public housing residents, Astoria Houses residents have the highest number of people who "never" exercise.<sup>38</sup>
- Astoria Houses' youth reported spending up to 5.5 hours a day watching TV and/or playing DVDs and video games.<sup>39</sup>
- 25% of Astoria Houses' residents reported that they had to walk >20 minutes to purchase fresh produce.<sup>40</sup>
- The local health clinic that served Astoria Houses closed two years ago. The closest

federally qualified health care center is in another community – access severely limited by transportation.<sup>41</sup>

**Poverty, Jobs, and Economic Security:**

- 4,428 children under age six in Astoria live below 200% of the federal poverty level.<sup>42</sup>
- 98% of target area public school students qualify for free and reduced-fee lunches.<sup>43</sup>
- 56% of births in Community District 1 are funded by Medicaid.<sup>44</sup>
- The Zone 126 survey showed a local unemployment rate above 50% for respondents who did not earn a high-school degree.<sup>45</sup>

**Crime and Safety:**

- In 2010, the neighborhood averaged 5 major felony crimes, >1 grand larceny conviction, 1 burglary, and .67 felonious assaults daily.<sup>46</sup>
- In just one month – February 2009 – police raided 14 housing units and made 59 arrests for drug-related activities.<sup>47</sup>
- 61% of Astoria Houses respondents did not feel safe in their neighborhood in the evening.<sup>48</sup>
- 49% of Astoria Houses felt gang activity was the most critical problem in their neighborhood and were more concerned about gangs than residents at the Ravenswood and Queensbridge public housing developments.<sup>49</sup>
- The Zone 126 survey found that up to 45% of local students did not feel safe at school.<sup>50</sup>

**Technology (Lack of access to computer and the internet):**

- 60% of survey respondents do not have internet in their homes.<sup>51</sup>
- Zone 126 PN survey showed that Astoria Houses had the lowest rate of access of all surrounding public housing developments.<sup>52</sup>
- 69% of survey respondents want/need computer training.<sup>53</sup>

**Additional Indicators:** Respondents to the Zone 126 survey requested more services, including job and computer training and parenting classes (requested by 92% of respondents) to help them overcome the conditions listed above. Education is their most important concern.<sup>54</sup>

**Photographic Maps of Astoria Houses and Geographically Defined Service Area**



**Astoria House Detail**



**Total Service Area**

**B. Quality of the project design.**

**B (1). The continuum of solutions will be aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of targeted schools.**

As will be described in **B(2). Plan to create a complete continuum of solutions** which follows this section, Zone 126 PN has secured buy-in and a commitment to participate from Dr. Philip Composto, Superintendent of New York City School District #30, and the principals of the three schools attended by the children and youth of Astoria Houses.

Zone 126 PN will **work with the persistently lowest-performing high school.** As described in Section A. Need for Project, two of three partnering schools are re-structuring: the Albert Shanker Middle School and William Cullen Bryant High School while scores at the elementary school, PS 171, are declining. Bryant High School was included on the 2010/2011 New York State Education Department's list of persistently lowest performing schools, due to a graduation rate of 49% in 2008.<sup>55</sup> The school is currently working on a Transformation Intervention model, one of four methods outlined by the US Department of Education for improving low-performing schools. The transformation model includes the following actions: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms; (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools; and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support. In 2010, eleven low-performing schools in New York City were using the transformation model. Across the US that same year, the transformation model was being used by 72 of 164 low-performing schools in California, 22 of 26 schools in Minnesota, 7 of 12 schools in New Jersey, 18 of 25 schools in North Carolina, and 12 out of 12 in Oregon.<sup>56</sup>

**Status of current restructuring in lowest-performing school: William Cullen Bryant**

High School hired a new principal who has helped develop goals and clearly stated those goals to teachers, parents and students. In 2010/2011, the school day was reconfigured into two sessions, which is increasing attendance in all grades. Teachers now meet more frequently – on a weekly basis – with special education staff also included for the first time. Selected teachers and staff have also been trained in crisis intervention, helping to diffuse threatening situations among students. W. C. Bryant High School continues to need assistance in curriculum design and strategies that align with goals for student engagement and outcomes. It also has continuing needs for accomplishing data collection and providing meaningful assessments of classroom and student data, and in communicating with parents.

Zone 126 PN will provide critical resources to the three targeted schools by: (1) including them in a comprehensive continuum of solutions with the schools at the center; (2) providing access to research on evidence-based best practices directly aligned with the challenges they face; and (3) reorienting their approach to school reform from the traditional building-centric reform in isolation approach to the Promise Neighborhood vision of creating great schools through partnering with a strong system of family and community support.

## **B (2). Plan to create a complete continuum of solutions**

The **Zone 126 PN Mission** is to dramatically increase the number of low-income children in the target area who receive early childhood services, complete high school, graduate from college, and enter adulthood with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

The **Zone 126 PN Vision** is that every child in the target area – from cradle to college and/or career has sufficient access to 1) caring adults, 2) effective education, 3) preventive and medical health services, 4) a safe neighborhood, and 5) opportunities to help others. (For more

information, see America's Promise Alliance's "Five Promises.")

The **Zone 126 PN Approach** is to create a unique partnership and build capacity among neighborhood schools, early childhood education, service providers, community residents, private corporations, experts, and funders to build a continuum of services and supports based on best practices to assist all children in the target area. As will be described in the following sections, **Zone 126 PN** will create and coordinate a series of program planning communities of practice (hereinafter "work groups"), each composed of logical collections of stakeholders and each tasked with achieving specific work products. All work groups will address an aspect of the planning process, be represented in an overarching project leadership group, and create action plans for post-planning implementation. They will develop a long-term role for themselves after the project transitions from planning into implementation. As appropriate, members of the Zone 126 PN work groups will engage with peer groups from other Promise Neighborhood grantees to discuss and collaborate with each other regarding grantee projects.

**Zone 126 PN's specific, measurable goals** align with the Department of Education Promise Neighborhood results: 1) Children receive comprehensive early childhood services and begin kindergarten ready to learn, 2) Students are proficient in all core academic subjects, 3) Students successfully transition from middle school to high school, 4) Youth graduate from high school, 5) Youth pursue and obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential, 6) Students are healthy, 7) Students feel safe at school and in their community, 8) Students live in stable communities, 9) Families and community members support learning in neighborhood schools, 10) Students have access to 21st century learning tools.

**Zone 126 PN Core Principles** that will inform its process are: 1) The children and schools must be at the center of everything we do; 2) Accountability, excellence, and data-driven results

are fundamental to success; 3) Close, continual capacity building, engagement, and collaboration among partners is essential; and 4) Local resident engagement and input should be involved in all decision-making. The Zone 126 PN **Short-term plan** is to target Astoria Houses as an area of compelling need within the larger 30-block geographic footprint identified, where it will engage the community, and build a continuum of supports from cradle-to-college and career; the **Long-term plan** is to expand the model to create a promise neighborhood in the entire three zip code area bordering the East River, and successfully develop a model for a Promise Neighborhood in public housing that serve as a model nationally.

**Plan to build community support for and involvement in the development of the plan.** Elmezzi has been building strong relationships throughout New York City's social service network since 1996, bolstering the capacity of organizations for youth development, social services, and health care. A needs survey (described in Section A) provided an opportunity for Zone 126 PN to increase connections in the community among resident associations, school personnel, police department staff, social service and health care agencies, libraries, arts groups, local businesses, and faith-based organizations. The Zone 126 PN team created a structure for directing the proposed planning year that builds on existing momentum and partnerships, involves a broad constituency of stakeholders, and ensures that planning members will have true ownership of the process, with decision-making capability. The structure will also ensure partners' access to capacity-building resources throughout the planning year.

**Leadership.** The Elmezzi Board of Directors has provided overall oversight of Zone 126 PN and brings to the table contacts among the philanthropic and social service communities of New York. Elmezzi developed a **Zone 126 PN Founding Board** made up of a subgroup of Elmezzi Trustees which will be expanded during the planning year to include key stakeholders

and other community leaders. The Founding Board then convened an **Advisory Board** to engage the community. Elmezzi has identified a Community Engagement Coordinator who will facilitate the internal process of and collaboration between the seven working groups described in D: Management Plan. An outside evaluator will provide guidance and research to the working groups in identifying evidence-based best practices. Also see D. Management Plan.

Stakeholders will be empowered in guiding the planning year through membership in the existing **Advisory Board**. It is representative of the community through including (or recruiting) residents of Astoria Houses, low-income residents of other areas of the targeted community, leaders of non-profit CBO service providers, businesses, the three partner schools, School District #30, local government officials, and representatives from identified funding sources.

The Advisory Board will be tasked with creating the final plan for a cradle-to-career continuum of services based on assessments of the target groups and community, recommendations from the LEA superintendent and principals of the target schools, and recommendations from community members. The Advisory Board will meet each six weeks during the year to review recommendations from the Zone 126 PN work groups.

The **Zone 126 PN Principal's Council** will consist of the Principals from the three partnering schools and a Coordinator. The Principals have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (attached), committing them to serving on the Council, which will meet monthly to review all major programming recommendations of the working group and make recommendations to the Advisory Board.

Zone 126 PN will create and oversee the seven working groups which will focus on the specific tasks necessary to achieve the academic and family support goals identified by the US DOE Promise Neighborhood Initiative, specifically: 1) Thrive by Five (ages 0-5); 2) Students

Achieve (grades K-8); 3) Young Adults Succeed (High School to college entry); 4) Career building (college and adult training); 5) Family and community supports (all ages); 6) 21st Century learning tools (acquiring PC's and Internet access for youth; 7) Participatory Data and Impact (data systems, publications, dissemination).

In order to **organize and engage the total 30 block community**, Zone 126 PN will inform each resident about the initiative and will recruit residents to serve on the Advisory Board and the work groups. In Astoria Houses, Zone 126 PN will collaborate with the Tenants Association on a building-by-building organizational effort to inform residents about the progress of project planning and eventual implementation, and it will solicit input through surveys, community meetings, focus groups, and a Website. Monthly community dinners will be held to facilitate communication and to encourage stakeholder buy-in. Zone 126 PN will participate in ongoing Resident Association meetings to ensure that residents are heard, are informed and involved, and that the issues and solutions being considered by Zone 126 PN are truly relevant. The Zone 126 PN Website will offer on-line feedback and provide updates on events and results of the planning project. In the 21 block area adjoining Astoria Houses, the information sharing and community organizing will be done using the schools as the center. The organizing strategy itself will be modeled after that being used in Astoria Houses. In order to **ensure a complete continuum of solutions for children at Astoria Houses and to target schools with access to solutions for children not in the target group or school** the working groups and the Advisory Board will meet regularly; some of these meetings will focus on the children, including those not residing in Astoria Houses yet attending the target schools, while others will concentrate on the neighborhood. This will allow Zone 126 PN to develop separate community engagement strategies, one for the neighborhood and one for the schools. A chart of

partners and their roles in planning for a continuum of solutions is included in Section D. Management Plan.

**B (3). Solutions leverage and coordinate with neighborhood assets.**

The chart of Zone 126 PN partnerships and their role in the seven working groups provided in Section D. Management Plan, as well as the attached support letters and MOUs, dramatically illustrate how far the applicant has progressed in establishing the comprehensive community support needed to succeed in a Promise Neighborhood Planning Year. In addition, Elmezzi has strong, ongoing relationships with public officials from the Federal level to the local Community Board level, as well as the local business consortium, the Long Island City Partnership, to help navigate systems and provide advice on funding resources. Zone 126 PN will be implemented in partnership with the New York City Housing Authority, three target schools, and the Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, a leading advocacy organization which offers insight into systems and networking among decision makers throughout the city and state.

In order to identify Federal, State, or local policies, regulations, or other requirements that would impede its ability to achieve its goals, Zone 126 PN will rely on the exhaustive knowledge and experience of the Elmezzi and its various partners, in which expertise in all areas of the continuum of services can be found. Significant barriers previously identified, along with the measures taken to overcome them, will be included in regular reports to the US Department of Education, as well as other evaluation reports and, where applicable, regularly required reports to other relevant agencies. It is the applicant's reasonable anticipation that no serious regulatory impediments will be identified, but rather that government policies are part of the environment in which the project and its partners will conduct the Planning Year.

**C. Quality of project services.**

**C (1). Needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine solutions.**

The purpose of the needs assessment is to explore issues related to education, health, and social welfare that children and youth in the target neighborhood face in their daily lives. Data gathered from the needs assessment will shape the neighborhood revitalization strategy undertaken by this program, as well as establish a baseline for the education, family, and community support indicators used to monitor the progress of this program. Needs assessment data will also direct the planning team on how best to coordinate a continuum of programs and resources within the target community to effectively address the needs of children, youth, and their families in a way that is efficient, high quality, and high impact. Please also see data related sections in D. Management Plan.

**Needs Assessment Methodology (For Surveys and Interviews)**

The planned community needs assessment will build upon the needs survey previously conducted by Zone 126 PN. It will include surveys, focus groups, and interviews at multiple time points throughout the planning year to provide the planning team with key data needed for the segmentation analysis of children and youth within the target community. The data collection strategy for the needs assessment will be developed collaboratively by the external evaluator and partner agencies. Structured questionnaires will be administered in a face-to-face format with children, youth, parents, community leaders, and partner staff, as well as online. The project will conduct structured focus group discussions with school officials, teachers, service providers, and community residents. Structured observations of the target neighborhood (including measures on safety and resources) will also be developed and implemented during the needs assessment.

The overarching goal for administering surveys and conducting interviews is to inform the development of a feasible and relevant program agenda, identify gaps in the continuum of services and supports, and create annual benchmarks that will significantly improve the education and development outcomes for children and youth in the community.

Conventional mail and phone surveys will have a limited role, if any, in data collection. This is a reflection of the historically low response rate among low-income minority populations. The target population has an understandable lack of trust when the interviewer conducts a survey via phone or mail. In response to this cultural sensibility, the project will use more costly face-to-face interview methods using a structured questionnaire. Survey instruments will be culturally competent and will reflect the limited literacy, frequent suspicion, and language barriers of the target population. Use of interviewers with demographic and cultural characteristics comparable to the target population, albeit with higher levels of education, will invoke trust in order to increase response rates, reduce social desirability bias in responses, and increase data quality.

Data collection will be designed to yield information suitable to disaggregation into six overarching domains selected to capture crucial information that will drive the planning process.

The following table illustrates alignment of program goals with the six domains:

<b>Structure of Segmented Analysis</b>	
<b>Program Goals</b>	
Goal #1 Ready for kindergarten: early childhood educational indicators	
Goal #2 Proficient in core subjects: # / % students testing at or above grade levels	
Goal #3 Successful MS to HS transition	
Goal #4 Graduate from high school: graduation rates at local high school(s)	
Goal #5 College / career success: #/% students with post secondary degrees / other credentials	
Goal #6 Health	Goal #7 Students feel safe
	Goal # 8 Community stability
Goal #9 Supportive families and community	
Goal #10 21 <sup>st</sup> Century learning tools: #/% students school / home computer and internet access	
Disaggregated Domains	Aligns with Goals
<b>Targeted Schools</b>	1, 3, 4, 7, 9 & 10.
<b>Age</b>	2, 3, 7 & 10.

<b>Gender</b>	5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
<b>Ethnicity</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
<b>English Language Proficiency – Students and Families</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10.
<b>Individual with disabilities (as defined by IDEA)</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10.

**To leverage the needs assessment process in order to build and strengthen school and community partnerships,** Zone 126 PN will include all stakeholders in the design and implementation of data collection to the maximum extent possible, by obtaining input through the previously described councils and work groups, integrating stakeholder input in continuous revision of needs assessment strategies and activities, and seeking qualified community residents for employment roles in data collection. Engagement will result in reliable and accurate data, as well as encourage buy-in of program initiatives by key stakeholders and partners.

The project will collect both quantitative and qualitative data from a variety of sources. Combining quantitative and qualitative data sources is referred to as a mixed method approach and is the preferred technique among social science researchers conducting rigorous program evaluations. Researchers seeking associations between primarily quantitative outcomes in children and youth and primarily qualitative socio-cultural data can look to mixed method research designs for structured and tested integrative processes. The data sources proposed for this needs assessment include: household surveys; national or local standardized tests to measure key outcomes in children and youth; focus group and structured individual interviews with key stakeholders such as children, youth, parents, school officials, community leaders, partner staff, local education authorities, and neighborhood service agencies (i.e., clinics, after school programs, recreational centers, etc.); and regional/national datasets. This combination of extant secondary data sources and locally developed measures will provide a comprehensive and multi-faceted picture of the range of issues faced by the children and youth in target neighborhood.

Zone 126 PN will collect data for educational indicators and unique family and

community support indicators that align with the goals and objectives of projects, and it will subsequently use these as project indicators. The following mini-logic model lists the ten goals, the needs as they are currently known, indicators as they are currently identified, and possible solutions to be considered. During the proposed Planning Year, Zone 126 PN will use this mini-logic model as a general guide, filling in the need as it is assessed and the strategies with associated indicators as they are developed.

Goal	Need	Strategy, best practice to explore	Indicator(s)
<p>Goal #1 All children ready for kindergarten</p>	<p>1) Pre-natal and early child medical care to minimize premature births, low birth-weights, birth defects, and disabilities developing in early childhood.<sup>57</sup>                      2) Positive effects of preschool treatment on intellectual development &amp; academic achievement that are evident through age 12.<sup>58</sup>                      3) Early childhood “front end” services for children ages 0 to 5 in order to create a “trickle-up” of improved preparation and outcomes in school.</p>	<p>1) Explore ways to help the target group access insurance or sign up for other health coverage that they qualify for, and provide quality on-going health care locally. Best practice to explore: Community Healthcare Network’s Long Island Health Center.                      2) Work with School District #30 to increase local pre-K &amp; Head Start programs, assist CBOs in providing Head Start and quality daycare, and explore creating programs at Astoria Houses.                      3) Identify resources to improve early childcare/development, such as public, private, and faith-based childcare; Head Start; the Queens office of the Administration for Children’s Services, and local clubs. Use partners’ experience to strategize methods of ensuring that children are prepared to succeed in school when they enter kindergarten.</p>	<p>1) # / % children ages 0 – 5 with reliable, non-emergency room medical care.                      2) # / % three-year-olds and kindergartners who demonstrate age-appropriate functioning at the beginning of the program.                      3) #/% children ages 0 - 5 participating in center- or home-based early learning programs.</p>
<p>Goal #2 Student proficiency in core subjects</p>	<p>1) Low scores due to a lack of early childhood preparation quickly become evident in elementary schools and worsen in MS &amp; HS.<sup>59</sup>                      2) While two of the</p>	<p>1) Use partnerships with the School District and principals to gauge needs and identify additional evidence-base best practice models.                      2) Partners and other local organizations can improve the coordinated continuum of services,</p>	<p>1) # / % of students at/above grade level on state assessments required by the ESEA</p>

Goal	Need	Strategy, best practice to explore	Indicator(s)
	three targeted schools are re-structuring, they lack sufficient resources and a comprehensive community approach.	including OST services, one-on-one and small group learning, ESL and literacy instruction. <sup>60</sup> 3) Identify professional development for teachers and administrators. 4) Partner with OST service providers.	(grades 3 – 8 and once in HS)
Goal #3 - Successful MS to HS transition	1) Attendance is a key indicator of future student failure. 2) Research shows that increased attendance in MS improves HS performance. <sup>61</sup>	1) Address health factors which contribute to absenteeism 2) Engage partners as partners in improving attendance. Zone 126 PN will bolster these efforts by building a neighborhood-wide early warning data system for attendance problems and provide community resources to create a school atmosphere in which high expectations dominate. 3) At monthly family events communicate to parents the importance of attendance. <sup>62</sup>	1) Attendance rates of students grades 6 - 9.
Goal #4 HS Graduation	1) 40% of eventual dropouts can be identified via poor performance in 6 <sup>th</sup> grade and 75% by 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. <sup>63</sup> 2) The New York State Education Department placed the targeted HS on the “Lowest Performing Schools” list due to low graduation rates (at or below 50%).	1) Assist School District and HS in creating multiple pathways to student engagement and success, including on-site Young Adult Education Centers at the schools. 2) Explore best practices: the Youth Transition Funders Group has selected NYC to study the multiple pathways model with the Dept of Ed’s new Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation to analyze the dropout crisis and develop a strategic plan. Resulting models are the Young Adult Borough Center offering focused study only on those credits needed to graduate; Transfer High Schools for small supportive group study and full-time GED programs.	1) HS graduation rates.
Goal #5 College & career success.	1) 15.1% of dropouts are unemployed. Those with a diploma are 2 times as likely to be unemployed as are college graduates. <sup>64</sup> 2) Local HSs have low graduation rates and	1) Work with City University of New York’s TRIO / Upward Bound programs to prepare students for college. <sup>65</sup> 2) Explore the best practice models developed by America’s Promise Alliance and the Youth Development Institute. <sup>66</sup>	1) #/% students with post secondary degrees and/or other credentials

Goal	Need	Strategy, best practice to explore	Indicator(s)
	<p>residents have high unemployment rates.</p> <p>3) Astoria Houses residents indicated high interest in vocational training on survey.</p>		
<p>Goal #6 Health</p>	<p>1) Proper eating and exercise habits make children healthier.<sup>67</sup></p> <p>2) Zone 126 survey found sedentary lives among residents.</p> <p>3) A lack of zinc, iron, vitamin B, and protein in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 years causes problematic behavior later on; and more malnourished children are at greater the risk of anti-social behavior.<sup>68</sup></p> <p>4) Zone 126 survey showed lack of access to fresh produce and unhealthy snack choices.</p>	<p>1) Identify resources to provide exercise programs at the partnering schools, via OST programs and at Astoria Houses.</p> <p>2) Identify resources to educate target groups on nutrition, provide avenues of obtaining fresh, healthy produce.</p> <p>3) Improved nutrition and exercise education in targeted schools.</p> <p>4) At monthly family events communicate to parents the importance of good nutrition and exercise.</p> <p>5) Explore as potential best practices the SPARK Program and Reducing Sedentary Behavior.<sup>69</sup></p>	<p>1) # / % of children who participate in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous daily physical activity</p> <p>2) #/% children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.</p>
<p>Goal #7 Students feel safe</p>	<p>1) Students need tools to address bullying, resolve conflict, and cope with safety issues.<sup>70</sup></p> <p>2) Zone 126 survey found a high proportion of MS students reported experiencing or seeing bullying and substance abuse at school.</p>	<p>1) Zone 126 PN will use a school climate needs assessment evaluation tool that collects perception data from students, staff, and families to measure the extent to which the school setting promotes or inhibits academic performance.</p> <p>2) Resources to be identified to teach coping skills to children and youth; create safe community culture.</p> <p>3) Teachers will receive professional development in teaching conflict resolution and managing bullying.</p> <p>4) Explore as potential best practices AmeriCorps and Harlem Children’s Zone Peacekeepers Program.<sup>71</sup></p>	<p>1) #/% who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school.</p>
<p>Goal # 8 Community stability</p>	<p>Student mobility rates are impacted by doubling up of families in apartments, high</p>	<p>1) Surveys identify factors that impact student mobility.</p> <p>2) Develop a continuum of services to address factors of instability in the</p>	<p>1) Student mobility rates.</p>

Goal	Need	Strategy, best practice to explore	Indicator(s)
	immigration rates, grandparents as caregivers and high foster care rates.	home as well as at school. 3) Explore best practices i.e. Harvard Family Research report on successful school district practices. <sup>72</sup>	
Goal #9 Supportive families and community	1) The single most important thing parents and teachers of early learners can do to build literacy skills in children is to read aloud to them. <sup>73</sup>	1) At monthly family events communicate to parents the importance of reading to children. 2) Provide free or low cost books. 3) Provide adult literacy classes. 4) Explore best practices of Commission on Reading report. <sup>74</sup>	1) #/% families who read to their children, encourage college goals
Goal #10 Have 21 <sup>st</sup> Century learning tools	1) Students need to be techno-literate to succeed in school, college, and careers. 2) Parents need to be techno-literate to help children learn.	1) Identify resources to provide free and/or low cost computers and internet access, adult computer literacy training and create computer lab(s) at Astoria Houses. 2) Identify best practices: <i>Information Society</i> report on laptop programs. <sup>75</sup>	#/% students with school and home computer and Internet access.
<b>NOTE: A primary Planning Year deliverable will identification of best practices supported by strong or moderate evidence to be used in the subsequent project implementation.</b>			

**C (2). Solutions will follow best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and will drive positive outcomes.**

Elmezzi, through its subsidiary Zone 126 PN, is well positioned to manage a multi-level needs assessment and segmentation analysis, given its recent success in planning and conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of 3,000 local residents across three communities in northwest Queens, which evaluated over 60 demographic, socioeconomic, health, and educational variables. This needs assessment was completed in close collaboration with the same stakeholders who will be part of the Planning Year. Capacity will be greatly enhanced by hiring a director of information/data manager and engaging an external evaluator with exemplary research capacity, as well as through the capacity of identified project partners.

Ray Laszczych, Director of Resource Development brings years of experience as a key leader of the Harlem Children’s Zone, the most prominent model of a Promise Neighborhood, and with the DC Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, a 2010 Planning Grant winner, while sharing

his tremendous depth of experience in identifying and implementing solutions that follow best available evidence, including strong or moderate evidence to drive positive outcomes. In addition, the project will identify a Strategy Consultant and an Evaluator who will contribute experience, knowledge of best practices, and research capacity. The chart on the following pages documents alignment between the indicators listed in the Notice and the Planning Year.

<b>EDUCATION INDICATORS AND RESULTS THEY ARE INTENDED TO MEASURE</b>				
<b>NOFO Indicators</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Method of Analysis</b>	<b>Assessment Goal</b>	<b>NOFO Result</b>
# and % of children, birth to kindergarten entry, who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.	-Household survey -Interview local health agencies -National database chosen by evaluator	Descriptive analysis disaggregated by age, ethnicity, and English as a second language learners and families	Assess health needs and possible supplemental health program development	Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.
# and % of three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally appropriate early learning measures	Standardized Assessment instrument – identified by external evaluator	Conduct benchmark analysis at PS 171 Peter G. Van Alst Elementary with comparison group	Assess learning gaps of targeted children to help guide the development of program	Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.
# & % of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, including Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool.	Household survey	Descriptive analysis disaggregated by age, ethnicity, and English as a second language learners and families	Assess # of children in early education programs to evaluate need for additional early education programs in the community	Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.
# & % of students at or above grade level according to State math and ELA assessments in the grades required by the ESEA (3 <sup>rd</sup> - 8th and once in HS).	Standardized Assessment instrument	Conduct benchmark analysis at the targeted schools with comparison group	Assess learning gaps of targeted children to help guide the development of program	Students are proficient in core academic subjects.
Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade	Academic records	Descriptive analysis disaggregated by age, ethnicity, gender, ESL, and students identified with disabilities (as defined by IDEA)	Assess truancy rates for PN students to assess the need for program initiatives geared to improve student attendance	Students successfully transition from middle school grades to high school.
Graduation rate	-Academic records	Longitudinal analysis	Assess academic success	High school

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	at targeted schools -National databases identified by external evaluator	disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, ESL, and students identified with disabilities (as defined by IDEA)	rates of children to evaluate participation in neighborhood programs in an attempt to identify best practices.	graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential.
# & % of Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular HS diploma and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without remediation.	-Academic records at targeted schools -National databases – identified by external evaluator	Longitudinal analysis disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, ESL learners, and students identified with disabilities (as defined by IDEA)	Assess academic success rates of children to evaluate participation in neighborhood programs in an attempt to identify best practices.	High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential.
<b>FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT INDICATORS AND RESULTS THEY ARE INTENDED TO MEASURE</b>				
<b>NOFO Indicators</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Method of Analysis</b>	<b>Assessment Goal</b>	<b>NOFO Result</b>
# & % of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily	Household survey	Descriptive analysis by age, gender, and ethnicity.	Assess health needs of children & supplemental rec program development	Students are healthy.
# & % of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily;	Household survey	Descriptive analysis by age, gender, and ethnicity.	Assess nutritional needs of children to help guide supplemental food program development	Students are healthy.
# & % of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment; or Students feel safe at school and in their community.	-Household survey & focus groups -School records on violent incidences -Interviews with key stakeholders -Neighborhood Crime records	Quantitative and qualitative analysis by targeted schools, age, gender, ethnicity, English as a second language learners, and students with disabilities.	Assess level of violence children encounter to help guide supplemental program activities geared to keep students safe and lower incidence of violence in schools and communities	Students feel safe at school and in their community.
Student mobility rate; or Students live in stable communities.	-Household survey -Targeted school admission records -Interviews with	Quantitative and qualitative analysis by targeted school, age, ethnicity, English as a	Assess the level of PN family mobility and continuity of children's education to help guide	Students live in stable communities.

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	targeted school key stakeholders	second language learners, and students with disabilities.	need for supplemental academic programming development.	
For children, birth to kindergarten entry, the # and % of parents or family members who report that they read to their child three or more times a week.	-Household surveys -Review or past studies	Conduct benchmark analysis by age, gender, ethnicity, ESL learners, and students with disabilities with comparison groups.	Assess the level of reading in the home to help guide program development in education awareness activities.	Families and community members support learning in PN schools.
For children in grades K-8, the #/% of parents/family members who report encouraging their child to read books outside of school; For children in grades 9-12, the #/% of parents/family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career;	-Household surveys -Parent focus groups	Quantitative and qualitative analysis by targeted schools, age, gender, ethnicity, English as a second language learners and students with disabilities.	Assess the level of academic encouragement of students by family members to help guide program development in education awareness activities.	Families and community members support learning in Promise Neighborhood schools.
# & % of students who have school and home access (and % of the day they have access) to broadband internet and a connected computing device; or Students have access to 21st century learning tools	-Household surveys	Descriptive analysis by age, ethnicity, and English as a second language learners and students with disabilities.	Assess the level of access to internet and wireless technology in the PN households to help guide program development activities that increase internet and wireless technology access.	Students have access to 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning tools.
The # and % of children who participate in high-quality learning activities during out-of-school hours or in the hours after the traditional school day ends	-Household survey -Parent focus groups -Interviews with key stakeholders at targeted schools	Quantitative and qualitative analysis by targeted schools, age, gender, ethnicity, ESL and students with disabilities	Assess participation in current after school programs of PN children and need for additional program development of after school programs.	N/A

**D. Quality of the management plan.**

**D (1). Zone 126 PN will work with the neighborhood, its residents, the schools, the LEA, government leaders; and other service providers.**

***Capacity to plan and implement a Promise Neighborhood***

Elmezzi was founded in 1996 by the developer of the Pepsi recipe who, coming from a humble upbringing in Astoria, Queens, wanted to help others in need become productive members of this society. Board membership is comprised of leaders in New York's major legal and financial institutions who actively provide fiscal supervision and oversight in fulfilling Elmezzi's mission. Since its founding, Elmezzi has assisted approximately 75 organizations across New York City's social service and health networks, helping them build and strengthen their capacities. Prior projects include assisting the successful re-structuring of a high-risk public school in the Bronx, Urban Assemblies Academy for Civic Engagement, by helping select the management group and new principal. Zone 126 PN will directly benefit from relationships forged through fifteen years of giving.

As previously stated, Elmezzi created Zone 126 PN to improve the home neighborhood of its founders by working alongside area residents and leaders. Under this grant, Elmezzi is committed to providing a continuum of services to youth and families in its target neighborhood. As part of this commitment, Elmezzi is providing a \$421,000 match.

Elmezzi meets all three eligibility requirements: (1) It has served the community since 1996 helping to provide solutions to issues identified for inclusion in this proposal; (2) It provides the local community with a voice. Elmezzi is physically located in the Astoria Community and is relocating to a new facility within walking distance of Astoria Houses. Elmezzi is currently in talks with NYCHA add a Zone 126 office *within* Astoria Houses. The

**Zone 126 PN Advisory Board** has been established and involves residents in decision making with at least one-third of members composed of Astoria Houses residents, other low-income target area residents, and a local public official representative, the Director of Constituent Services from New York City Council member Peter F. Vallone, Jr.'s office. Additional members will be recruited from local CBOs that provide portions of the planned continuum of services; (3) It partners with the LEA, and three high-risk public schools in providing the school improvement solutions. The Advisory Board is and will be the primary community engagement structure. See attached MOU.

***Management Team:***

**Jose Rivero, President of the Thomas & Jeanne Elmezzi Private Foundation:** Mr. Rivero has over 35 years of executive-level management skills and has served on the Elmezzi Board of Directors for nearly ten years. As Vice President of Operations for two leading computer consulting firms before joining Elmezzi, Jose draws upon his proven team-building skills with strong client orientation and has extensive experience developing and growing all aspects of the organization. With certification in Project Management, Jose has a keen understanding of the need for innovative and strategic planning, and he takes a hands-on approach in leading Elmezzi, actively participating in various grantee programs.

**Christopher Cutter, MSW, Executive Director of Zone 126 PN:** Christopher Cutter was responsible for the launch of Zone 126, the implementation and distribution of the 2009 comprehensive community survey, and is now leading the Promise Neighborhood activities, overseeing all program activities and partnerships and supervision of staff. Prior to joining Elmezzi, Chris designed a civic engagement volunteer network for downtown Los Angeles, while under the tutelage of nationally-recognized community development expert Bill Watanabe

at Little Tokyo Service Center. Mr. Cutter has been responsible for exploring the Harlem Children's Zone and Promise Neighborhood Models. He has developed a broad-base of partnerships with community providers as evidenced by the MOU, and will lead and manage the planning for Zone 126 Promise Neighborhood.

His previous experience also includes: serving as evaluation consultant for Washington University in Saint Louis' social entrepreneurship competition; co-designing a non-profit in Lusaka, Zambia serving street children; directing an 80-member community service program; and working directly to improve life for low-income college students, the chronically mentally ill, and persons with physical and mental disabilities. Chris holds a Master's Degree in Social and Economic Development from Washington University in Saint Louis.

**Ray Laszczych, Director of Resource Development (Contractual):** The former and long-time Director of Development for the Harlem's Children's Zone has also worked with the District of Columbia Promise Neighborhoods Initiative launched by the César Chávez Public Charter Schools in Washington DC. His extensive expertise on the policies and best practices of the Harlem Children's Zone is invaluable in developing the Zone 126 PN continuum of services.

**Anju Rupchandani, Community Engagement Coordinator:** Ms. Rupchandani is from Astoria and attended the targeted high school. Her fundraising and program administration background includes over a decade of youth development experience, three years as After-School Director at The Educational Alliance and Director positions at Queens-based youth organizations: Sunnyside Community Services and at the Sports & Arts in Schools Foundation.

**Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA):** Zone 126 PN is contracting with Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to provide full fiscal management of the project. RPA is a nonprofit organization that currently advises on and manages more than \$200 million in annual

giving and grant programs on six continents. RPA also offers superb relationships and contacts throughout the philanthropic community.

**Qualifications of External Evaluator** (to be identified): The evaluator must be highly experienced in evaluating projects of the size and scope being proposed, have all the necessary skills and capacities to perform the various tasks identified in this proposal, have specific PhD level research capacity, and have sophisticated data and statistical analysis capacity. Finally, the evaluator must be knowledgeable of the education and continuum of services which are being planned for as well as fully culturally competent.

**Staffing Plan:** The **Zone 126 PN Executive Director (ED)** will have overarching administrative and leadership responsibility for all aspects of the Planning Year and the resulting program implementation. The **Community Engagement Coordinator** and the **Community Organizer** will report to the ED and will share responsibility to lead the various efforts to ensure broad community awareness of the project, full participation, community engagement, and strong stakeholder commitment/buy-in, and will assist the ED in developing and maintaining partner relationships. The **Data Manager** will report to the ED and will work with the external evaluator; he will be responsible for managing collection and entry of all project data.

**Contractual:** The **Evaluator's** role and responsibilities have been previously described. The **Strategy Consultant** will provide technical assistance and expertise focused on both conducting the Planning Year and the content of evidence-based best practice strategies to project staff and the various operational structures (Advisory Council, Principals' Council and work groups). He/she will also assist in the writing of a comprehensive strategic plan/implementation plan at the end of the planning year. The **Director of Resource Development** will have lead responsibility for identifying resources necessary to move from planning into

implementation as well as serving as planning advisor to project staff and the various operational structures. The **Communications Consultant** will develop branding, Website, and marketing materials, and assist in implementing the community engagement strategy. A **Database Expert** will assist the Data Manager and Evaluator in creating/operating the longitudinal database.

### *Existing Strengths*

Zone 126 PN partnerships also include major national organizations and New York City partners who will contribute in-depth experience in creating, researching, and implementing evidence-based models for producing successful schools and serving targeted children and youth at each stage of the cradle-to-college and career continuum. These partnerships include:

- **America's Promise**, a national organization with over 400 members involved in researching and strategizing for best practices in education, youth development, and dropout prevention. It includes corporate funders and private foundations, educational alliances such as the American Federation of Teachers, colleges, training institutions, and youth organizations. This partnership will allow Zone 126 PN to access evidence-based models and innovative approaches developed by national experts to help communities improve the odds that all children and youth will be ready for college, work, and life.
- **New York City Department of Education Adult and Continuing Education**: The Chief Operating Officer has signed a partnership agreement with Zone 126 PN, providing the insight and experience of a centralized division that oversees adult education across the five boroughs of New York City.
- **Expert on Harlem Children Zone and DC Promise Neighborhood models**: Zone 126 PN has hired Ray Laszczych as an on-going consultant. His extensive background working with the Harlem Children's Zone and currently with the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative will

provide insight into the evidence-based models utilized by these and other organizations.

- **New York City Housing Authority**, the operator of Astoria Houses, has agreed to play a critical role in supporting the initiative, providing space, data, communications capacity, coordination and other resources. They will participate on an executive level in the Advisory Council and be considered for a position on the Zone 126 PN Board.
- **Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC)** Founded in 1944 CCC provides comprehensive data on poverty in community districts throughout New York City, advocates for the rights of children, and identifies improvements and alternatives that create opportunities for children to thrive.
- **The Youth Development Institute (YDI)** in New York City supports the growth and development of young people by partnering with community organizations, schools, colleges, policy makers, funders, and others to create programs, train staff, and develop policies that encourage and enable young people to transition successfully to adulthood.

**Implemented the community's most comprehensive survey:** As previously described, Zone 126, led by Elmezzi's Chris Cutter, implemented the area's most comprehensive survey of needs, which included residents of three city housing developments, school personnel, police department staff, social service and health care agencies, libraries, arts groups, local businesses, and faith-based organizations. As a result of Zone 126's multiple engagement strategies of intensive networking, focus groups, community dinners, and an interactive website, 3,000 local residents responded to the 60-question survey, with Astoria Houses emerging as the area of highest needs. The full survey report, attached, is publicly available at [www.elmezzi.org](http://www.elmezzi.org).

**The total committed cash and in-kind match of \$843,800** far exceeds the 50% match required for a \$500,000 planning grant under the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative Notice of

Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

**D (2). Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.**

**Assessing needs, collecting data:** Zone 126 PN will hire a Data Manager and an outside evaluator, and it will work with the National Evaluator or other Department of Education designated entity to identify groups, develop surveys and data collection methods, and to interface with government and additional databases. Two partnering organizations, the Citizens Committee for Children of New York and America's Promise, will also provide expertise in the design of surveys and questions, and creation of data systems.

The External Evaluator will take the lead in developing and implementing the evaluation in close coordination with the Lead Applicant, as well as the Zone 126 PN Founding Board, the Advisory Board, the Principals' Council, and the seven working groups. This team will oversee development of databases, monitor data quality, and produce regular performance reports for key project and program indicators, as well as liaise with key stakeholders at the targeted schools and at District #30 for data collection activities. The external evaluator also will work to establish protocols for the use of program indicator data in order to protect participants' confidentiality, while sharing data on the progress towards program goals with both partner service providers and members of the community. Confidentiality will be achieved and maintained by replacing names with code numbers and/or only sharing aggregated data, as appropriate. All personal participant/subject information will be in a secured location and shared on a need-to-know basis following established regulations.

The external evaluator will also have lead responsibility for conducting the needs assessment, building/maintaining a longitudinal database, identifying/constructing data

collection forms/systems (including, but not limited to paper, online, and electronic forms), conducting focus groups and surveys, and segmentation analysis of all collected data. Finally, the external evaluator will provide research and guidance on evidence-based best practices to the various working groups.

Establishing a longitudinal data system will be complex effort and require careful coordination across partner organizations and key stakeholders. Data will be collected from a variety of sources, and it will be crucial to have representatives with different perspectives to ensure that data sources are not overlooked, to enrich the data analysis process, and to increase transparency and the reach of the dissemination process. The program will offer a planning structure that emphasizes inclusion of all key partners (e.g. residents, civic leaders, school personnel, providers, government officials, etc.), strong resident voice, and results-based planning focused on data and the identification of evidence-based strategies and programs. At the core of every aspect of Elmezzi's planning structure is community engagement that promotes leadership and ownership of the program among community residents. The key components of the planning structure include: the Founding Board for Zone 126 (an Elmezzi subsidiary); the Advisory Board, which is representative of a cross-section of low-income community residents and other key stakeholders; a Principals' Council; and the seven thematic work groups. Each of these groups will be facilitated by an expert who is familiar with the program area and goals.

The success of this program, and indeed its ability to collect, analyze, and use longitudinal data for decision making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, will depend upon carefully selecting work groups that will use data, evaluation, and research on evidence-based approaches to plan and implement solutions. Many partner organizations have access to data sources maintained by local, State, and Federal education authorities and have

agreed to provide Zone 126 PN with access throughout the planning and program period.

A multi-level database structure is essential because the Promise Neighborhood's service pipeline intends to affect outcomes for individual children, parents, schools, and the neighborhoods. The longitudinal analyses conducted for this initiative will need to both track educational, family, and community support indicators for the solutions proposed above, as well as capture all service activities and residents' interaction with them – both family units and individual children. The planning period will be used to develop the Promise Neighborhoods core database, coordinating with all service partners to ensure that we capture information on all children and parents participating in any of the pipeline of services at the point of entry and throughout their interactions with all Promise Neighborhoods programs. Parents and children will be assigned unique identifiers with a common root that enables them to be linked together. Children's IDs will also be cross-walked to their school IDs in order to link them to their school records. Similarly, each child's record will include participation in school and/or early education and after-school programs, as well as address information. These school and address flags will enable us to both examine differences among participants, as well as pull in the school and neighborhood indicator data from extant secondary data sources.

**Data system linkage to school, LEA, and State, public data accessibility, compliance with privacy laws/requirements; and management:** The external evaluator will work with the various partners in identifying which standardized tests and instruments will be used for needs assessment. Selection will follow two principles: (1) All instruments must be reliable (e.g. offer consistent results when taken at different times and/or given by different evaluators), valid (e.g. actually measure what it was designed to measure), validated for the specific testing purpose, administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel, not discriminate on a racial or cultural

basis, and be administered in participant's native language or other mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so; (2) To the maximum extent feasible, the project will use data from instruments already in use by the project partners (such as standardized tests mandated in NY City and State school regulations) in order to save cost and minimize intrusiveness.

**Zone 126 PN does hereby commit to:** work with the Department of Education, its national evaluator, and any other entity designated by the Department, to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a national Promise Neighborhood evaluation and specific solutions/strategies pursued by individual grantees. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that the national evaluator and the Department have access to relevant/requested program and project data, consulting the national evaluator in creating the project's evaluation strategy, and developing a plan for identifying and collecting reliable/valid baseline data for participants and a non-participant comparison group.

During the planning year, Zone 126 PN will work with the Federal Evaluator, project consultants, and partners to create a web-based database application that will allow the program and its partners to directly enter data. The project will ensure that all partners receive the training and support needed to accurately enter information at established reporting intervals. This information will include program participation, services provided, referrals, and outcomes for Promise Neighborhood participants. A comprehensive internet-accessible database will ensure effective and continuous collaboration, transparency, and accountability to all stakeholders.

Significant efforts, such as development and roll out of the Promise Neighborhood Scorecard, will also be made to be accountable to key beneficiaries of the Promise Neighborhood initiative, such as parents and community leaders. The Promise Neighborhood Scorecard is a dynamic tool designed to capture and communicate the decision-making process that underlies

education, family, and community data and its analysis, track progress towards key outcomes throughout the continuum of solutions developed for children and youth, provide real time access to local data for program planning and monitoring, and ensure continuous engagement of community leaders and members in the planning and decision-making processes of this program and its monitoring and evaluation. In the initial month of the planning period, Elmezzi will work closely with its external partner to develop a timeline for data monitoring and presentation to stakeholders and beneficiaries (e.g. community dinners).

**Zone 126 will use rapid-time data in the planning year and once the Promise Neighborhood Strategy is implemented, for continuous program improvement.**

Having a high-quality data system is not only critical for performance measurement, it is also critical for an overall evaluation of the continuum of services developed through this program, including assessing the impact and cost-effectiveness of these interventions. Zone 126 PN has identified two potential contractual candidates to serve as Database Consultants: Social Solutions and N Focus. They will bring the technical capacity to help develop and maintain a multi-level longitudinal data system that will support both the rapid-time and longitudinal database functionalities needed for continuous monitoring and evaluation of program initiatives.

As described earlier in this proposal, the Data Manager will manage and ensure the integrity of data gathered during program implementation, continuous access and rapid time analysis, and reporting of outcome and monitoring data with the key stakeholders of this initiative, including the Founding Board, the Advisory Board, the Principal's Council, and the seven thematic working groups. Partners and public stakeholders will have carefully structured access to data as appropriate. When necessary, other data will be accessible upon request.

Understanding and using program monitoring and outcome data will assist Zone 126 PN

and its partners determine if program goals are being achieved in an efficient and timely manner, and what practices need to be changed in order to heighten the impact of the continuum of services on program recipients. Continuous and rapid time data analysis will allow Zone 126 PN to ensure the relevance, efficiency, and quality of its program strategy and make well-informed decisions reliably. The use of varied data sources at multiple levels will permit Zone 126 PN to make mid-course corrections with the ultimate goal of improving the impact of the planning strategy on targeted children and youth. In the initial month of the planning period, Zone 126 PN will develop a timeline for data monitoring and presentations to stakeholders and beneficiaries to ensure systematic and continuous analyses and feedback of results towards program planning.

**Documenting the planning process, lessons learned, and best practices.**

As described earlier in this proposal, an outside evaluator will assist each of the groups proposed in this program's planning structure with research activities, including identifying best practices. Data from assessments and additional related information will be shared with all members of the planning group to provide a "big picture" perspective of local needs and to increase planning members' understanding and ownership of the planning process. Zone 126 PN will create a common language related to data that is spoken by program beneficiaries, partners, and stakeholders. Data will be available online, through written reports, shared at meetings, and provided in response to specific requests. Clear, reasonable criteria will be established to guide what data is available to which stakeholder, in what form, and at what intervals. This will protect confidentiality and allow vigorous internal debate, while maximizing information sharing.

Zone 126 PN will conduct a detailed and ongoing process and outcome evaluation to document the planning process and challenges encountered during early implementation. The evaluation will provide empirical data on program implementation, assess whether the

programming strategies were implemented as planned, and whether the magnitude and direction of observed outputs and outcomes occurred as expected. It will also identify and disseminate lessons learned and best practices selected for post-planning implementation. The evaluation will include program data tracked in the longitudinal data system described earlier in this proposal, structured observations of meetings and early program activities, periodic interviews with key actors, including planning groups (e.g. Advisory Board, Principals' Council, working groups), and focus groups with parents, service providers, and community residents. Process data will be a useful tool to ensure that the program is accountable to key stakeholders and partners.

Perhaps most importantly, the data systems will be built as a significant asset for the implementation, continuous improvement, and evaluation of identified best practices that emerge from the Planning Year. As a significant philanthropic presence in our nation's largest city, Elmezzi is also well positioned to disseminate the fruits of Zone 126 PN and leverage the Department's investment into regional system-wide impact.

**D (3). Partnerships' alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in MOU and holds partners accountable.**

The attached Zone 126 PN Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a collaborative partnership for the requested Planning Grant. It confirms and describes the target community and target population and outlines the overall mission of the project: Assessments and planning to ensure that all children and families living in the 30-block defined geographic area can access a complete continuum of solutions from cradle to career, and that additional children and families who do not live in the target geographic area, but attend local target public schools in School District #30 can also access the solutions. The MOU identifies and describes each of the project partners and the partnership leader as Elmezzi. It delineates a detailed

partnership governance structure, a shared theory of change, and planned project activities and theories of action.

The MOU commits to an assessment, data collection, and evaluation process. It includes specific commitments by all partners to provide resources. Partners signing the MOU include:

Sector Represented	Name of Partners							
<b>I. Housing and Target Group</b>	Astoria Houses Tenants Association, NYC Housing Authority.							
<b>II. Schools &amp; LEA</b>	New York City School District #30, William Cullen Bryant H.S. #445, IS 126 - Albert Shanker Middle School, P.S. 171 - Peter G. Van Alst Elementary School.							
<b>III. Early Childhood Education and Development</b>	Astoria Blue Feather Head Start, United Methodist Head Start, Hallett Cove Child Development Center.							
<b>IV. Continuum of Service Providers</b>	(Families, Youth, Digital Divide, Community): East River Development Alliance, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House, Variety Boys & Girls Club, America’s Promise, City Year New York, Queens Library, Citizens Committee for Children of New York, Digital Divide Partnership, Long Island City Partnership.							
<b>V. Healthcare</b>	The Floating Hospital, the Weill Cornell / NY Hospital Medical Center of Queens.							
<b>VI. Public Officials and Organizations</b>	Queens Community Board #1 District Manager Lucille Hartmann, New York City Council Representative Peter F. Vallone, Jr.							
<b>VII. Private for-profit sector</b>	The Long Island City Partnership, the marketing entity of a consortium of local businesses and property owners in a newly developed area that in ten years has grown into one of New York City’s largest business centers, built largely through marketing and by leveraging and promoting state and city incentives.							
<b>The following section of this table identifies partners’ links with probable work groups.</b>								
Work Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Public Official
Partnering Group Alignment	Thrive by Five	Students Achieve K – 8	Young Adults Succeed HS to College	Career Bldg & Adult Ed	Family & Community	21st Century Learning Tools	Data & Impact	
1	Lead Agency: Elmezzi	Providing \$421,000 cash support Included in ALL Work Groups						
2	Astoria Houses Residents' Association	Represented on Advisory Board Encouraged to participate in any/all work groups.						
3	PS 171	•	•					

4	IS 126		•					
5	W. C. Bryant HS			•				
6	NYC School Dist. 30	•	•	•				
7	America's Promise	•	•	•	•		•	
8	Astoria Bluefeather Head Start	•						
9	Citizens Committee for Children						•	
10	City Year NY		•				•	
11	Digital Divide Partnership					•		
12	East River Development Alliance				•	•		
13	Floating Hospital					•		
14	Hallet Cove Child Development Center	•	•		•			
15	Jacob Riis Settlement		•			•		
16	Long Island City Partnership				•			
17	NYC Dept Ed Adult & Continuing Ed				•			
18	NYC Housing Authority				•			
19	Queens Library	•	•		•	•	•	
20	United Methodist Head Start	•						
21	Variety Boys & Girls Club		•		•			
22	Weill Cornell NY Hospital					•		
23	Youth Development Instit.						•	
24	NYC Council - Peter Vallone Jr.							•
25	Queens Community Board 1							•

**D (4). Integrating funding from multiple public and private sources.**

During the Planning Year, Zone 126 will seek to identify and secure broad funding for implementing the identified continuum of services, the evidence-based best practices, and the coordination of services that emerge from the planning. It is unrealistic to assume that creating a terrific plan will automatically yield the funding required to implement that plan. Elmezzi brings a tremendous depth of experience, knowledge, and relationships within the New York City corporate and private philanthropic community. Zone 126 PN is Elmezzi’s highest profile initiative, and its Board and leaders are 100% committed to tapping those relationships to secure

project funding.

To secure resources in this time of economic distress and political wrangling over funding for the needs of distressed communities, Zone 126 PN has engaged the services of Ray Laszczych as Director of Resource Development. Beyond Mr. Laszczych's exceptional talent, his experience at Harlem's Children's Zone has endowed him with an encyclopedic knowledge of the funders most likely to support Zone 126 PN. His experience at the District of Columbia Promise Neighborhoods Initiative expanded on his Harlem experience by working directly with federal officials. He has built networks of funders in NYC, including program staff and Board members, and he has been invited at Philanthropy New York, the NYC philanthropic association, about the community engagement work done in Astoria via the surveys. ED Christopher Cutter has also been invited to serve on internal committees within funder networks. Project partners range from area CBOs with knowledge of available funding to the NYC Housing Department and Department of Education with knowledge of major city, state, and federal funding. Finally, support from elected officials bring access and clout to assist in making fund seeking a success.

Identifying and securing adequate funds to roll out and sustain a Promise Neighborhood is a daunting task. Elmezzi and its partners began working on funding development a few years ago and are ready to hit the ground running in an effort to ensure that planning flows smoothly into implementation without gaps that would hurt the Promise Neighborhood's chances to succeed. Zone 126 PN is currently creating a "sustainability" work group/funding desk that will focus on building funding streams into the implementation. Partners CCC, Elmezzi, YDI, America's Promise, NYC Department of Education will support this effort.

Finally, the partnership has put its resources on the line in this application. Elmezzi is directly committing \$421,000 of cash and in-kind resources for the Planning Year and will

provide generous implementation support. The partners have committed \$422,800 of resources for planning and intend to do more when the project is implemented.

**Conclusion:** Identified resources will not be limited to the needs of implementing the fruits of the Planning Year. Zone 126 PN will grow from its start at Astoria Houses and will incorporate the entire Zone 126 target area. The project will be built with a vision of replication and scale-up focusing on similar neighborhoods and housing developments in New York City and nationally. The replication and scale-up plan will have these three initial stages:

- Stage 1: Create in the Geographically Defined Service Area a continuum of services and supports that dramatically improves outcomes for children and youth who live there.
- Stage 2: Create, document, and systematize a sustainable model of a Promise Neighborhood in Urban, Public Housing Developments.
- Stage 3: Replicate the Promise Neighborhood model in two adjoining housing developments within Northwestern Queens to create a contiguous Promise Neighborhood for *every* child that lives on or near the East River in Northwest Queens, serving over 21,000 children and youth.

Elmezzi believes that every child should enjoy an equal opportunity to achieve success. All children deserve a quality education, access to essential health care, and a safe and supportive neighborhood. Unfortunately, this is not the everyday reality in Zone 126. Zone 126 is one of the least funded, most overlooked “high-need” region in New York City. It is also a community of passionate, hardworking, admirable people, motivated to see change happen, and generous with their time, effort, and patience. They care deeply about the success of the community’s children. Together we will safeguard every child’s future by focusing energies and resources on creating greater opportunities and better supports for Zone 126’s young people.

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