Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: CASA de Maryland, Inc. (U215P120136)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Selection Critera 1	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Selection Criteria 2	20	18
Quality of Project Services		
1. Selection Criteria 3	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Selection Criteria 4	45	45
Sub Total	100	98
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP 5	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CPP 6	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CPP 7	1	
Sub Total	5	3
Total	105	101

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: CASA de Maryland, Inc. (U215P120136)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.**

   In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 15

    Sub Question

    1. **Magnitude of Problems to be Addressed**

    The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

    Strengths:

    Applicant provided a thorough assessment of data points. More than 18,000 residents live in the target area and 96% are minorities, 77% are Latino. Nearly 3 of 4 people speak a language other than English, and 18% live in poverty. More than half of the adults have never even started school. This profound lack of education, coupled with limited language skills, makes it difficult for many adults to find livable wage work. As a result, many lack insurance and there is a general shortage of health care physicians in the community, leaving 80% of residents in a 2008 survey without primary health care (p. 6). The target high school expels 1 in 5 students and 40% of Latino students at HSPS drop out; only 59% of students graduate in four years.

    Weaknesses:

    No weakness found in the assessment of need.

    Reader's Score: 10

   2. **Geographic Area Description**

    The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

    Strengths:

    The applicant identified a well-defined geographic area in Prince George s County, less than 3 miles from Washington, DC. The target area is a .8 square mile census designated place (8). The census tracts are described in terms of whether they are primarily housing or commercial areas. The census tract in which the applicant agency is located contains two high density housing complexes. The applicant did a good job of describing the geography of the target area in terms of the physical location and housing patterns.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. Comprehensive Strategy and Solutions:

The extent to which the continuum of solutions will be aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

The lead agency, CASA, has a strong relationship with the LEA. Three schools have been identified as target schools and make up a feeder system. Two of these schools are low performing. None of the schools are currently in turnaround status due to a NCLB waiver. School leadership is implementing a plan in collaboration with a county support team, and approved by the Maryland Dept. of Education. The school system is utilizing a framework based on Mass Insight s model of three core capacities: Readiness to Learn, Readiness to Teach, Readiness to Act. Principals of each partner school will chair a subcommittee and work to align interventions for students as they transition through grades.

Weaknesses:

No detail was given on the state approved plan for the two schools that had consistently not met AYP. Without providing any detail of the state approved plan, it is unclear how CASA and other community partners can support that plan and what would be appropriate roles for community partners.

Reader's Score: 8

2. Implementation Plan:

The extent to which the applicant describes a proposal to plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career.

Strengths:

Applicant provided a detailed timeline of key tasks for building the continuum (p. 27). Phase 1 will include community engagement activities to introduce the Promise Neighborhood project. This includes neighborhood forums, school based meetings, and a media campaign. In phase 2, the partners will collect data and a research team will conduct a needs assessment and segmentation analysis. Phase 3 will focus on decision-making to compile a set of evidence-based solutions. Phase 4 will be focused on preparing for implementation.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 5

3. **Identification of Existing Neighborhood Assets:**

The extent to which solutions leverage existing neighborhood assets and coordinate with other efforts, including programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds.

Strengths:

The applicant identified existing programs and partnerships that align with their PN plan. The applicant does an excellent job of enlisting large scale partners with systemic influence, and grassroots, neighborhood based assets are identified (21). Partners also include organizations who are more directly responsible for direct services to children and families (22-26).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

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

In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

1. **Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis:**

The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine each solution within the continuum.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed description of their plan to conduct a needs assessment. The applicant has defined several indicators in addition to those defined by the Department of Education. These include several health related indicators. Data sources include secondary sources, primary sources from local agencies and local surveys. The Urban Institute will conduct the needs assessment and segmentation analysis (p15). Each working group will have a technical expert whose role it is to ensure that solutions considered by the working groups are evidence-based.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Evidence-Based Solutions:**

The extent to which the applicant describes how it will determine that solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and ensure that solutions drive results and lead to changes on indicators.

Strengths:

A process is outlined for identifying research-based strategies using technical experts to advise the working groups. Technical experts have been identified based on their high level of experience (13-15). They will also identify gaps in services and review literature for best practice strategies. This support by experts will provide a strong process for identifying effective solutions within the continuum.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicant's management team and project director in all of the following areas

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. **Ability to Work with Neighborhood Residents:**

   Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicants management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

   Strengths:

   The lead agency is an experienced organization with a history of working with diverse populations and stakeholders, particularly low-income immigrant families. The lead partner has established a structure that includes strong representations from residents in the target area. The agency has worked with this neighborhood community for 25 years (p. 41). CASA has participated in county government planning efforts and has established relationships with the target schools.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses found

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **Ability to Utilize Data:**

   Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.

Strengths:

The applicant has a well-developed plan for collecting, analyzing and using data for decision-making. Four working groups will develop the set of community solutions. Each group will be co-chaired by an expert practitioner and a local community representative (p13). The applicant describes a past process with Langley Park service providers, educational institutions, and residents to address challenges of the low income Latino community. Services were described as sil-ed and a lack of continuity created obstacles for effective interventions. The applicant stated that progress has been made in breaking down silos since submitting two previous Promise Neighborhood grants. The applicant's role in the Prince George's County "Transforming Neighborhood Initiative" has helped target financial and programming resources across county agencies and community organizations. These meetings have prompted more intentional work among partners (11).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 15

3. **Ability to Create Partnerships:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.

Strengths:

The applicant has submitted a Promise Neighborhood proposal twice previously, and both times received the highest scores for any applicant from Maryland. The partners have used that process to improve their coordination and planning, and to break down programming silos (p11).

The MOU details specific contributions and roles of each partner. The applicant describes roles for the management team members and project teams, and defines accountability within that management structure (36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 10

4. **Ability to Integrate Funding Streams:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.

Strengths:

The lead agency, CASA, has a history of securing funding to lead and participate in community-led initiatives. Such efforts have included crime prevention, health services, and literacy efforts. CASA has managed nearly ▮▮▮▮ in federal funding from the Department of Labor for the past two years (p. 52). Thus far, partners have secured ▮▮▮▮ in matching funds from nine partners including ▮▮▮▮ in in-kind match from the LEA. They have also have established a financial stability committee which will support the longer term stability of this initiative.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network:

To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.

Strengths:

A subcommittee on early learning will be established to develop a continuum of solutions to ensure that early childhood services are high quality, produce effective early learning outcomes, and efforts are coordinated with state, and county level efforts (p. 53).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. Quality Internet Connectivity:

To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.

Strengths:

A coordinated plan will address broadband availability, barriers to broadband adoption, computer ownership and access, skills training for parents and students, and school and education provider broadband adoption. Possible interventions are defined within the proposal for each of these priorities (p. 55).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Arts and Humanities:

To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. **Quality Affordable Housing:**

   To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

   Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/09/2012 10:11 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: CASA de Maryland, Inc. (U215P120136)
Reader #2: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Selection Critera 1	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Selection Criteria 2	20	19
Quality of Project Services		
1. Selection Criteria 3	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Selection Criteria 4	45	45
Sub Total	100	99
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP 5	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CPP 6	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CPP 7	1	
Sub Total	5	3
Total	105	102

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: CASA de Maryland, Inc. (U215P120136)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.

In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 15

    Sub Question

  1. **Magnitude of Problems to be Addressed**

The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

In 2010, a State of Maryland report identified the proposed project's target neighborhood as a foreclosure hot spot, with local families losing their homes at a rate 135 times the state average (p.5).

The application clearly demonstrates that the diversity of the neighborhood is a challenge to health, social service, and government services providers. Nearly three of every four people speak a language other than English at home, as opposed to only one of six of Maryland residents and one of five among all people living in the U.S. (p.6).

The application strongly demonstrates that there are education related challenges in the targeted neighborhood, as more than half of the adults never started high school (p.6).

The application includes strong data indicating that criminal activity is more significant than in the rest of the state. Violent crimes are about a third higher, and property crimes almost 50% higher (p.7).

The application includes detailed information on key school related education outcomes for the targeted neighborhood. For example, only 70% of kindergarteners entering the neighborhood's Langley Park McCormick Elementary School (LPMES) are ready to learn, as opposed to 83% of their Maryland peers (p. 8).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

  Reader's Score: 10

 2. **Geographic Area Description**

The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

Strengths:

A detailed, census-tract level map is included in the application (A:4). Also, detailed socioeconomic and demographic data on the targeted neighborhood at the census tract level is included in the application (p.4).

Information on socioeconomic indicators compares data to both State and National data. This includes data on the percent of households in poverty in the geographic area and the percent of households without a 9th grade education (p.5).

The application includes a very detailed description of substandard housing in the geographic service area. Additionally, the application clearly describes how the poverty in the area contributes to instability in residents' ability to maintain adequate housing. For example, in 2010, a State of Maryland report identified the area's principal zip code (20783) as a foreclosure hot spot (p.5).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

1. Comprehensive Strategy and Solutions:

The extent to which the continuum of solutions will be aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

The application indicates that the project includes a focus on a school feeder pattern which includes two consistently low-performing schools serving neighborhood children (p.11).

The application strongly demonstrates plans to ensure the continuum of solutions developing out of the project will align with rigorous school improvement plans, as the planning will involve four working groups, one which will focus on school success. The School Success subcommittee will have subcommittees representing each of the three schools that serve the targeted neighborhood (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

The application does not include detailed information on existing school improvement plans for the three targeted, low-performing schools in the targeted neighborhood. The application only includes general references to improvement plans being in place (p. 11).

Reader's Score:　　9

2. **Implementation Plan:**

The extent to which the applicant describes a proposal to plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career.

Strengths:

The applicant organization has been working with local partner organizations to create a continuum of solutions from early learning through college and career readiness, and family and community supports since 2010 (p.3).

The applicant proposes a significant focus on addressing a continuum of solutions. To facilitate this, the Planning Project will use four Design Working Groups (DWGs) which include: Early Education/School Readiness; School Success; Career and College Readiness; and, Community-wide supports (p.12-13).

At the beginning of the planning process, project staff will analyze the Education indicators and Family and Community Support indicators and assign them to the four designated Design working groups (p. 14).

The application includes a very detailed time-line and description of tasks to be completed to accomplish project objectives (p. e213).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:　　5

3. **Identification of Existing Neighborhood Assets:**

The extent to which solutions leverage existing neighborhood assets and coordinate with other efforts, including programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds.

Strengths:

The application includes a very detailed description of the applicant organization and its key partners, and the resources that they can leverage for the project. There are ten partnering organizations including: the School District, the County, several colleges, a community health center, and other grass-roots organizations, in addition to the applicant organization (p.21).

Partner organizations include representation from a wide variety of interests. They include: education, higher education, health care, a youth center, and county government (p.21).

The application includes detailed descriptions of programs administered by existing organizations, and programs, and initiatives that currently serve the neighborhood (p.22-26).

There are excellent examples of the applicant organization's relationship with grass-roots organizations including the Latin American Youth Center and the Federally Qualified Community Health Center (p. 21-22).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

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

In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

1. Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis:

The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine each solution within the continuum.

Strengths:

The application indicates that project leadership staff will utilize services of the Urban Institute in conducting the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, and the Urban Institute has extensive experience in this area (p.29).

The applicant proposes a multifaceted approach to the needs assessment and segmentation analysis. This includes reviewing indicators; focus groups; and, a neighborhood resource assessment and best practices review (p.29).

Indicators for the project will align with program efforts related to a County branch of the National Neighborhood Indicators project, which is a collaboration between local organizations and the Urban Institute (p.30).

The application includes a detailed table that clearly defines the Department of Education Educational Indicators, and the Family and Community Support Indicators that will be included in the needs assessment and segmentation analysis (p.32-33).

The Promise Neighborhood Planning group will add several additional indicators beyond the required Education and Community and Family Support indicators that specifically focus on the needs of Langley Park children. These may include: the # and % of children who have health insurance, the # and % of children who are overweight or obese, the # and % of children up-to-date on vaccinations, the # and % of children screening positive for lead, the # and % of children who have a dentist they regularly see, the #nand % of children ages 10-14 who indicate that they know someone their age who is involved in a gang, and the # of gang-related crimes in Langley Park (p. 30).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Evidence-Based Solutions:**

   The extent to which the applicant describes how it will determine that solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and ensure that solutions drive results and lead to changes on indicators.

   Strengths:

   Research Co-Directors for the project will inventory currently available programs and services in key areas of early education, K-12 education, public safety, and public health, and identify gaps in services and evaluate effectiveness of current programs (p.35).

   Key informant interviews will be conducted by research staff to help determine gaps in current programs available to neighborhood residents (B:35).

   Research staff will conduct extensive literature reviews around key indicators to identify best practices for achieving positive outcomes for children from cradle to college, and use best practices reviews to assess existing programs and services to determine how well the practices are supported by strong and moderate evidence (p.35).

   Solutions to be developed out of the planning projects will be focused on enhancements to existing programs based on evidence based strategies, and new programs will be developed based on a specific gap analysis where the planning process indicates that needed services for the neighborhood do not currently exist in any form (p.35).

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

   Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

   The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

   In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicant's management team and project director in all of the following areas

Reader's Score: 45

   Sub Question

   1. **Ability to Work with Neighborhood Residents:**

      Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicants management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in

paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

Strengths:

The Project Director has over twenty-five years experience in community development and program administration (p.36).

The applicant organization has worked with the neighborhood schools for many years. Over the past two years, the organization has developed a strong partnership with the LEA. The two organizations recently worked together to develop a new bilingual community high school, expected to open for the 2013-14 school year (p.43).

The applicant organization has a long history of working collaboratively with government leaders and other service
providers in forming partnerships to achieve common goals. An example is a recent partnership with Prince George s County government, which has an overarching goal of achieving and
maintaining a thriving economy, great schools, safe neighborhoods and high quality healthcare (p.44).

The applicant organization's Planning Liaison has over 25 years of experience in organizational management and program development and administration, in both the public and private sectors. The Planning Director will oversee the Community Engagement/ Decision-Making Team, and the Research Team (p. 38).

The application includes a detailed organizational chart for the project that clearly defines lines of reporting for project staff (p. e215).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Ability to Utilize Data:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.

Strengths:

Project partners will lay the groundwork for the longitudinal data system that will facilitate the evaluation of the continuum of strategies to be put in place once implementation of the Promise Project begins (p. 47).

Plans are in place to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the School District to facilitate the sharing of individual-level data for students enrolled in Promise programs whose parents have given explicit consent. This MOU will establish the procedures to be put in place to safeguard confidentiality; the specific school-based, LEA, and state indicators that the School District will facilitate for the Promise Project; and the frequency with which the School District will share the data (p.48-49).

The application includes very detailed descriptions of the education related and family and community indicators for which data will be collected as part of the Needs Assessment. Information on data sources, and level of aggregation is clearly described (p.32-33).

The application includes vey detailed descriptions of how data on indicators will be reviewed, and used to evaluate effectiveness of current school and community programs, and make improvements to programs (C: 29-30).

The applicant organization has a robust, existing database (Salesforce) that will be modified and enhanced to serve to track longitudinal project outcomes (p.48).

Very detailed information on the nine member Research Team is included in the application package. Bio-sketches are provided for each member and indicate that each has significant levels of experience with program analysis (p. e 115- e131).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

3. **Ability to Create Partnerships:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.

Strengths:

The application thoroughly documents the role that the ten partner organizations will play in the planning project (e187-e196).

Matching funds are well documented in letters of commitment.
Formal and informal relationships between the applicant organization and partner organizations, as well as between the partners and other community organizations, are described in detail (p. 21-25).

A detailed organizational chart is included in the application that shows lines of accountability between the applicant organization and other partner organizations (e.215).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

4. **Ability to Integrate Funding Streams:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.

Strengths:

A Financial Sustainability Committee will be chaired by a member of the Steering Council and will include members of the Steering Council and other people with access to resources to support Promise project initiatives. The Committee will be tasked with documenting potential public and private sources of investment in Promise Initiatives (p. 16).

The Financial Sustainability Committee will research new private and public sources of funding for

Promise initiatives (p. 16-17).

The applicant organization has a history of leveraging multiple funding streams and programs to provide a diverse set of community services. Current funding streams that support the organization's current ███████ budget include grants, contracts, and donations from over 450 government agencies, private foundations, individual donors, congregations, and corporations (p. 52).

The applicant has described plans to integrate high quality neighborhood programs into a continuum of solutions, building upon the neighborhood successes already in place to create its system of proposed solutions. A very detailed description of the partner organizations and current programs they administer is included in the application (p. 21-27).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network:

To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.

Strengths:

A Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network will be established as one of the project subcommittees, and will include key service providers of early learning services in the neighborhood (p. 53-54).

One of the key partner organizations (CentroNia) currently provides a significant level of early childhood education services in the proposed Promise Neighborhood (p. 53-54).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. Quality Internet Connectivity:

To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.

Strengths:

The application clearly describes how improvements in broadband access for the student population will be measured (p. 53-54).

Proposal includes detailed information on the proposed Digital Blueprint development that will be led by the School Success and Community Supports Work Group (p. e75).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. **Arts and Humanities:**

   To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. **Quality Affordable Housing:**

   To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/05/2012 10:07 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: CASA de Maryland, Inc. (U215P120136)
Reader #3: **********

	Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Selection Critera 1	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Selection Criteria 2	20	19
Quality of Project Services		
1. Selection Criteria 3	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Selection Criteria 4	45	45
Sub Total	100	99
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP 5	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CPP 6	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CPP 7	1	
Sub Total	5	3
Total	105	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - PN Panel - 15: 84.215P

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

Applicant: CASA de Maryland, Inc. (U215P120136)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

 1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.**

   In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: **15**

   Sub Question

   1. **Magnitude of Problems to be Addressed**

   The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

   Strengths:

   The applicant provided a comprehensive set of need indicators describing the challenges facing the area's 4,100 children and youth and their community that included academic, health and community stability challenges. On pages 8 through 10, academic indicators provided include a documented decline in academic performance as students transition from elementary to middle and high school; only 59% of students graduating high school, and fewer than one in four of graduating Latino students who are half of the high school student body, enrolling in Maryland colleges or universities. The area has been designated as one of the County's most dangerous hot spots (p. 7) with crime rates 44% higher than Maryland as a whole. Other challenges include less than half of the area adults ever having started high school and the area designated a "foreclosure hot spot"(p. 5-6).

   Weaknesses:

   None.

   Reader's Score: **10**

   2. **Geographic Area Description**

   The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

   Strengths:

   Langley Park Neighborhood was described as an area 3 miles from Washington, DC, in Maryland. A map on page 4 of the narrative depicts the area and its geographic boundaries. The area is comprised of 3 census tracts with an affluent Maryland county to the west, a mix of commercial development and high density multi-family housing on the south. Other parts of the area are largely residential areas (p. 4). The information provided clearly describes the Promise Neighborhood geographic boundaries.

> **Weaknesses:**

None.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

   In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 19

> **Sub Question**

1. Comprehensive Strategy and Solutions:

   The extent to which the continuum of solutions will be aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.

   Strengths:

Langley Park Promise Neighborhood (LPPN) initiative is closely aligning its work with the school improvement initiatives centering in the area's three public schools through the work of three working groups, one for each school. These working groups will be chaired by each of the appropriate school principals (p. 13) who are currently leading their school's School Improvement teams. This intentional partnering of efforts will be guided by LPPN to identify age- appropriate solutions to students' academic problems across the age continuum (p. 17). In addition, LPPN has secured a commitment from the University of MD's School of Education to review and recommend evidence-based solutions for the targeted schools (p. 19). These strategies should ensure integration of the schools' improvement efforts and the work of LPPN.

   Weaknesses:

While Maryland no longer officially places schools in turnaround status, more detailed information on the school-focused improvement initiatives at the three targeted school sites beyond that on pages 18-19 would have more fully described the possible alignment of efforts with the likely reforms listed beginning on page 19.

   Reader's Score: 9

2. Implementation Plan:

   The extent to which the applicant describes a proposal to plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career.

   Strengths:

On pages 27 and 28 the applicant describes a four phase planning process that includes increasing engagement in the initiative, data gathering and decision-making that addresses the indicator areas detailed on pages 21 to 26. The Design Working Groups described on page 13 will compile a set of recommendations that will be combined into a proposal for a continuum of solutions by LPPN staff and present to the community through a series of forums (p. 28). Information from those forums will inform the finalization of recommendations by the Working Groups and presentation of the plan to the Steering Council for revision and approval. This proposal to plan should ensure development of a cradle to

college continuum.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 5

3. **Identification of Existing Neighborhood Assets:**

The extent to which solutions leverage existing neighborhood assets and coordinate with other efforts, including programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds.

Strengths:

The LPPN proposal includes key partners detailed on pages 21 and 22 in support of the work of this planning year by using current efforts underway sponsored by area organizations as the foundation for planning and enhancement of efforts. On pages 22 to 27, the applicant provides detail by result area of the current interventions underway that link to each area and the partner organizations associated with those efforts. These include year-round kindergarten programs, mentoring programs, college prep opportunities, and job placement programs. This alignment of existing interventions and key partners to planning areas provides a strong foundation of information for this initiative.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

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

   In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

1. **Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis:**

   The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine each solution within the continuum.

   Strengths:

   On page 14, the applicant describes how the Data Working Groups will provide input into the needs assessment and segmentation analysis and how those groups will use the data gathered to inform identification of evidence-based solutions. LPPN has identified possible additional indicators in addition to the Promise Neighborhood required set and has begun working to ensure that hard to measure data will be gathered (p. 30 and 35) using processes such as working with the school district to ensure students and staff have the opportunity to participate in data gathering. In addition to the data identified in the Indicators Table on pages 32 to 34, LPPN will develop and host a series of focus groups to gather information from parent groups stratified by age of child and home language and from middle and high school boys and girls (p. 31). This thoughtful and extensive data gathering effort and LPPN's use of the data in its Data Working Groups is a strong process that should result in the identification of effective

solutions.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Evidence-Based Solutions:**

The extent to which the applicant describes how it will determine that solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and ensure that solutions drive results and lead to changes on indicators.

Strengths:

LPPN will use Technical Resource Expert teams (TREs) focused in 4 key areas of k-12 education, early learning, public health and public safety, led by identified issue-area experts to gather, compile and review information on evidence-based solutions tied to the work of the LPPN initiative (p. 29 and 15). A key partner organization, Urban Institute, will lead this work and use the USDE's criteria for evidence to guide their work. A listing of sources for evidence-based practice is provided on page 29. Information will be provided to the Data Working Groups and will be scanned for applicability to low-income immigrant populations (p. 29). This process should ensure that identified solutions are informed by appropriate evidence.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicant's management team and project director in all of the following areas

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. **Ability to Work with Neighborhood Residents:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicants management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

Strengths:

The applicant provided extensive information on CASA's experience working on a wide range of community building initiatives in the neighborhood with a variety of local, county and other government leaders; local schools and district officials; and other community entities, including businesses (p. 40-47). These include collaborating on the County's Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative, partnering with the local schools and area banks on increasing financial literacy, and developing a comprehensive

literacy promotion program. In addition, individuals identified to staff LPPN have a variety of long-term experience working in the neighborhood in areas directly related to LPPN's scope (p. 36-39). This organizational and individual issue and community expertise provides LPPN the capacity to collaborate with residents and other key entities.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Ability to Utilize Data:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.

Strengths:

LPPN's data plan builds on the experience of the host organization, CASA, to gather, analyze and make data available and transparent to the community (p. 47-48). CASA staff will work with LPPN and Urban Institute staff to integrate the data collection process into existing systems. As in the CASA system, LPPN proposes a data system that parents can log onto at any time to view profile information on their child/children (p. 49). This will be completed by quarterly meetings available for parents to meet with bi-lingual counselors to review and understand the information available. Building on CASA's experience, LPPN plans to share quarterly performance reports with the community through community events and meetings (p. 50). The experience of the host organization in designing data collection systems and using data to drive decision-making will build LPPN's capacity during the planning year.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 15

3. **Ability to Create Partnerships:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.

Strengths:

The LPPN MOU provided in the application appendix includes detailed information on the vision, theory of change and theory of action for the initiative, as well as detailed information on the commitments of each of the partner organizations and their organizational purpose/missions. In addition, each organization provides further information on their commitments in individual letters of support also in the appendix. The MOU included in the application references a governance structure for holding partners' accountable (p. e188).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

4. **Ability to Integrate Funding Streams:**

Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.

Strengths:

As in other areas, LPPN will build on the experience of their host organization, CASA, to ensure integration of funding streams and leveraging of resources to support the identified solutions resulting from the planning year. CASA's ▇▇▇▇ annual budget is generated from government, foundation and individual donor/organization support (p. 52). To ensure development of this capacity for LPPN during the planning year, a Financial Sustainability Committee will convene to create a fund development plan building on CASA and other key partner's existing relationships and strategies (p. 16).

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network:

To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.

Strengths:

The applicant provided information on all the required elements to meet this priority including naming an experienced lead staff, describing the Early Learning Network and its alignment and role in the planning year identification of solutions, and coordination with state efforts (p. 53 and 54).

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. Quality Internet Connectivity:

To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes the development of the LPPN Digital Blueprint as part of the School Success and Community Supports Working Groups. The applicant provided information on the data gathering scope and listed possible interventions that conform with the requirements for this priority area (p. 55 and 56).

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Arts and Humanities:

To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. Quality Affordable Housing:

To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
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