

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215P120062)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Selection Criteria 1	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Selection Criteria 2	20	20
Quality of Project Services		
1. Selection Criteria 3	20	19
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	0
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CPP 6	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CPP 7	1	0
Sub Total	5	3
Total	105	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - PN Panel - 5: 84.215P

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215P120062)

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 provides a clear description of the need for the project and includes comparative data regarding poverty levels, academic need, and a high degree of community health risk factors (page 7). Crime rates and details regarding the community ethnic and refugee population are also provided. Statistics that illustrate a high degree of poverty, unemployment, and poor academic performance are also included (page 5).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. Geographic Area Description

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly describes the geographical area targeted for project services and includes four maps that illustrate the location in the context of the State, the city and the school district to be served (page 52). Cross streets and boundaries for the 47 city block neighborhood are also described.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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: 20

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 applicant provides a detailed plan to utilize a Results Based Accountability Framework to plan a continuum of solutions that will address high quality early learning programming, education reform, college and career readiness, and family and community supports (page 10). A table that clearly describes the expected results for education and family support interventions is provided on pages 11-14. Strategies for achieving results are specified in a table on pages 15-17.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 provides a detailed plan for coordinating a continuum of education solutions that includes early childhood education solutions such as maternal health supports, summer academic programs to improve student achievement, and a partnership program with a community college to increase dual enrollment and college and career readiness (pages 11-12). A strong plan for improving school safety is also described, and includes a plan to conduct a safety and security audit, develop an emergency response plan, and create an environment of prevention (page 15). The applicant details a well-thought out plan for developing community supports without gaps that will enhance education and improve childhood outcomes.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant provides a detailed description of existing neighborhood assets and includes a plan for leveraging them to improve the targeted neighborhood. Examples include working with community supports such as a maternal and child health clinic, to provide a medical home for children in the district, and a partnership with a center for active family engagement to engage parents and families in promoting student achievement. There is a strong plan to work with parents, community and business leaders to establish support education. Strategies include developing student support teams in each school, creating a Parent Advisory Council and a Parent Guide, facilitating Community Conversations with stakeholders, and promoting the use of an electronic system that enables parent access to student records (page 16).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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: 19

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 describes specific details about how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be conducted and provides a timeline for data collection and data review activities on pages 20-21. Strategies include a root cause analysis to discover the story behind the data, identification of service and system gaps, and a review of national data system models. Four work groups are described in an organizational chart, to determine solutions, support the project and reduce the duplication of services (page 19). There is also a plan to develop a parent and a student advisory group, to help review community data (page 19). The applicant provides a clear plan for a segmentation analysis on page 24 that includes a data review, focus group data and a survey to identify gaps.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant provides a solid plan for determining solutions that are based on evidence and includes the use of four work groups and a Results Based Accountability Framework. A graphic is provided that lists existing services and sources of evidence that support effectiveness (page 28). There is a plan to help providers determine if they are implementing these programs with fidelity.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe how the level of strong or moderate evidence will be determined for solutions selected for the project.

Reader's Score: 9

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 provides a historical review of it's experience in working with the targeted area and includes a description of past funded projects such as an Americorps project and a Safe Schools Healthy Student project. There is a plan to build capacity of the management team through the development of a Steering Committee that includes school staff and experienced partners who are committed to the project. A list of 29 partners and their function is provided on pages 32-33.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The applicant provides a description of the experiences and lessons learned by the management team in regard to collecting and analyzing data on pages 37-38. An example is the team's awareness of the sensitivity of data and barriers to data sharing (page 38). Resumes for the project director indicate

Sub Question

experience with using survey data for project planning and experience with program evaluation. The applicant provides a strong plan for collecting, analyzing and using data that includes support from a data facilitator who will coordinate data retrieval, and a project evaluator. There is a plan to utilize a Results Based Accountability Framework to minimize the need for new data collection and provide an efficient method for data use (page 38). A strong MOU is also provided to support holding partners accountable for their commitments to the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant describes lessons learned and 45 years of experience in creating formal and informal partnerships on pages 33-37. Examples include the development of a strong Steering Committee that includes community leaders, members of the Board of Education, and government officials (page 33). Long-standing relationships with community action groups such as the United Way are also described. The project director's resume is included in the appendix and describes significant experience, specifically in designing solutions and building partnerships. The applicant provides a clear plan to build capacity by working with 29 partners and includes a table that lists each partner and the function that they will provide to support the project. There is also a plan to utilize work groups, a Steering Committee and a strong management structure to guide the project. The applicant provides a theory of action and a theory of change that are appropriate for the project (page 40), and a memorandum of understanding to hold partners accountable that describes a vision statement for each partner.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The applicant describes past experience in integrating funding streams from several federally funded projects such as an Americorps grant and a Comprehensive Child Development Program (page 41). In addition, partners such as the school district have been awarded a Safe Schools, Health Students grant and have experience working to leverage ARRA funds to support a series of programs to increase school readiness (page 43). The applicant also describes a strong partnership with the business, community and education leaders who have a history of working together to impact the future workforce of the community by making post-secondary education available to high school graduates in the targeted school district (page 44).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The applicant provides a well-conceived plan to develop a Comprehensive Early Learning Network plan that includes the use of an existing Early Childhood Coordinating Group, a Results Based Accountability Framework, and support from the parents and community in the targeted neighborhood.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address this criteria.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

The applicant provides a strong plan to study and plan arts and humanities programs that will enhance opportunities for targeted community to participate in cultural experiences and includes the expertise of a project director with a background in integrating arts programming in low-income communities (page 51).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address this criteria.

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215P120062)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Selection Criteria 1	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Selection Criteria 2	20	20
Quality of Project Services		
1. Selection Criteria 3	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Selection Criteria 4	45	45
Sub Total	100	100
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP 5	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CPP 6	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CPP 7	1	0
Sub Total	5	3
Total	105	103

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - PN Panel - 5: 84.215P

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215P120062)

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 very comprehensive narrative to address the magnitude of problems that will be addressed in the proposed project. All of the indicators addressed in the criteria are adequate to believe that the targeted area are experiencing some challenges.

The applicant indicates that Marshalltown faces the daunting task of handling a number of urban-type issues (high poverty, heterogeneous ethnic population, etc.) while grappling with access to very few resources. The school district is the 16th largest in the state (of 366 total), and the economic challenges in the community can be seen in the district's free and reduced lunch data. Every elementary school in Marshalltown has a significantly higher percentage of low-income students than the state as a whole. Marshalltown has the 6th highest rate of poverty.

Marshalltown has experienced significant changes over the past two decades. In the early 80s Marshall County was the 7th wealthiest county out of the 99 counties in Iowa. Today Marshall County has the 2nd highest free and reduced lunch (FRL) rate of all 99 Iowa counties.

The applicant indicates that in relation to the other 366 districts in the state, their district is consistently ranked near the bottom in both math and reading proficiency. They have the 24th highest 9-12th grade dropout rate in Iowa.

Children in the targeted neighborhood has experienced challenges along the cradle-to-college-to-career continuum. For example, only 59% of 3rd grade Rogers students spent enough time in the attendance center to be considered Full Academic Year. Nearly 4 out of 10 3rd graders moved in or out of the school in one academic year. The Rogers mobility rate is 39%. Rogers has been designated as a School in Need of Improvement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

2. Geographic Area Description

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

Strengths:

The applicant is proposing a project that will take place in Marshalltown, Iowa, led by Mid Iowa Community Action (MICA), the local Community Action Agency. Marshalltown is located in a rural county in central Iowa and currently has just over 27,500 residents. The applicant indicated that Marshalltown is a community that is not classified as rural or urban and not suburban.

The Rogers Promise Neighborhood Project will serve all children and families living within the Rogers Elementary attendance zone. The Rogers neighborhood is made up of 47 blocks of variable size and is bounded by Main Street on the south, Center Street on the east, 9th Street on the west, and the Marshalltown city limits to the north. Rogers Elementary is a PreK-4 attendance center serving 228 students and is part of the Marshalltown Community School District (MCSD).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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: 20

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 applicant has provided a very detailed and comprehensive narrative to outline their process for developing and aligning ambitious, rigorous and comprehensive strategies for improving schools.

The applicant indicated that over five years ago a group of stakeholders began to plan for the Promised Neighborhood grant. They formed groups to develop Comprehensive Strategy Work Groups. The work groups mobilized to include the entire community in an effort to share responsibility for its children by developing a community consensus on a blueprint for systemic change.

Each community workgroup was required to perform extensive data collection and assessment, as well as, develop and implement a community plan. Sites worked to produce 5-year plans that were data driven and outcome based. These plans were used as guides in helping to develop the Comprehensive

Sub Question

Strategy sites decide what they could do to impact youth in their community.

The planning among the workgroups by communities is an innovative method for ensuring solutions are aligned with community needs.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

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 Rogers Promise Neighborhood planning team will use the Mark Friedman's Results Based Accountability (RBA) Framework for the planning and implementation process. The RBA process begins by defining the Promise Neighborhood results they want for families, children, and the community and in the second step they will define the indicators they will use to document whether they are achieving their desired results.

The applicant indicated that in the planning process they will examine general and specific subgroup trends in the indicators and discuss the data. This process will be used to understand the reason for the direction of the trend lines, and to refine the current Continuum of Solutions by adding, enhancing, or dropping activities. The core of the Continuum of Solutions includes: (a) high-quality early learning programs and services coordinated through their active network and designed to improve outcomes across multiple domains of early learning for children from birth through 3rd grade; (b) ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive education reforms that are linked to improved educational outcomes for children and youth in preschool through the 12th grade; (c) programs that prepare students to be college- and career-ready; and (d) family and community supports delivered by a collaboration of all major service agencies in the City.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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 provided a detailed narrative that specified with detail that the project has the support and collaboration from many stakeholders in the region. The project is a collaborative effort and the stakeholders are participating through the work groups and various other advisory groups. The applicant has provided a very detailed chart to highlight all their efforts to leverage support from existing programs. For example, (1) the local Business Education Alliance, (2) the Safe and Healthy Schools Project, (3) the Marshalltown Education Partnership, and (4) the Spread the Word-Read by Third project. The applicant has done an excellent job with bringing together all of their available resources to leverage existing neighborhood assets.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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 indicated that as a part of their initial planning process they will look at the current school district strategic plan and used this plan as a baseline for developing strategies and solutions. The current plan is organized around 5 strategies, each focusing on a different area, yet connected through their combined focus on increasing student achievement.

Between 2011 and 2015, the district will implement these strategies and their related actions and tasks. The district plans to consistently monitor data and routinely provide reports so the community can evaluate the district's improvement. The Promised Neighborhood project will align with the district goals, which are; (1) quality instruction, (2) safe schools, (3) superior staff, (4) strong partnerships, and (5) sound investments.

During the planning year, the applicant is planning to will make sure that the Promise Neighborhoods data system is fully integrated with the district's system. In addition, the Promise Neighborhoods plan will help align early childhood programming in the community with K-12 programming to increase the likelihood that students are ready for Kindergarten.

The applicant indicated that they have assembled an excellent team to manage the Rogers Promise Neighborhood needs assessment process and segmentation analysis. The data collection and analysis process is comprised of five steps: (1) updating required indicators; (2) segmentation analysis; (3) determining the story behind the data; (4) additional data collection; and (5) refining our Continuum of Solutions.

Using the district strategic plan is an excellent strategy for the applicant to use in the planning process. This will ensure that the applicant can best identify and describe indicators that will align with the needs of the schools and the children they serve.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

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:

The applicant has provided a very reasonable and adequate discussion to describes how they will determine the best solutions for the PN project. The effort is collaborative and the process has the potential to ensure that solutions results will lead to changes in the indicators.

Many of the services outlined in the preliminary Continuum of Solutions already exist in Marshalltown and in Iowa, especially those related to preschool and early childhood services. Gaps in the continuum will be identified during planning and result in the selection of additional evidence-based interventions.

During the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, the Work Groups will create plans which will provide the following information for each indicator: (1) a statement of concern, (2) a discussion of why the issue is happening; and (3) a description why the issue is happening in the Rogers Neighborhood. Project staff will help the Work Groups understand what the research tells us about how well the selected interventions would work to address the indicators. For programs to be chosen, each will need to have a rating of exemplary or promising, in order to be considered a strong contender for inclusion in the continuum of solutions.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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 a comprehensive discussion detailing the capacity of the team to work with all stakeholders. For example, the governance structure for the planning period which is The MICA Board of Directors is a highly active group with 1/3 of its members from low-income families, 1/3 who are elected officials, and 1/3 from the private sector.

Sub Question

All of MICA's Board members have an interest and/or expertise in early childhood and school-aged youth. The Steering Committee has been in place for nearly 2 years and includes all key players in the community. Each of the Work Groups has a designated chair and a volunteer parent leader. The parent and student advisory groups will meet monthly to give input to the work.

The extensive experience and expertise of these organizations and individuals will bring considerable strength to the planning project. In the table on page 38 the applicant indicated which groups are part of the Steering Committee and which agencies will lead the Work Groups (subcommittees). The applicant has described a team of community, local, state and federal constituents that will help the organization build capacity for the program.

The applicant has proven that they have the capacity and ability to work with the neighborhood schools and the residents through past projects that directly affect the improvement of schools. (pgs. 40-44)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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 lead organization for the Rogers Promise Neighborhood project is Mid Iowa Community Action (MICA), the local Community Action Agency. MICA has a 45-year history of developing and managing successful human service programming. A private, nonprofit organization funded during the War on Poverty, MICA provides a wide range of services to over 22,000 people each year through its staff of 240 individuals.

MICA's primary activities for this planning project will include management of project staff, parent & student leadership training, community organizing, research, and collaborative planning and action. Project staff will be housed at MICA and in Rogers Elementary, which is physically located in the Promise Neighborhood project geographical targeted area.

Four Work Groups will lead the data review and planning for the Continuum of Solutions in their own content area. The first Work Group will include representatives of all key current initiatives in the Rogers neighborhood. Their task will include determining how to better align their efforts to: (1) reduce duplication, (2) determine if efforts have a strong research basis and (3) to identify gaps in service so that Rogers students achieve the PN indicators.

The applicant will also form resident Work Group for parents and a student group that will represent the diversity of the neighborhood. These two groups will help review student and community data to identify key issues. Through the focus groups, they will share their stories and help select appropriate programming. (pgs. 40-44)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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

Sub Question

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 provided a very comprehensive and detailed discussion on the many years the community and stakeholders have come together to work on collaborative efforts to bring support services to the neighborhoods to address many issues and challenges of the children and the residents. There have been many collaborations on other grants. The years of experience working together has brought about a collective vision from all the key stakeholders in terms of understanding the needs in the community. The applicant has provided very detailed MOUs in the proposal.

The applicant indicated that during the planning process, the Steering Committee will use the planning and deliverable schedule to hold all partners and consultants accountable for fulfilling their roles during the planning year as articulated in the MOU. Team members have learned from recent successful initiatives that in order to be successful, regular communication and reporting is essential, as well as, staying on course to focus on specific objectives. The project director and management team brings a wealth of experience to the project. For example through the years they have implemented and led services and program that: (1) aligning partner visions, theories of action, and theories of change; and (2) building an effective accountability system.

The Work Groups will rely on accessible web-based reporting tools and on regular meetings and committee reports to ensure full partner alignment and accountability in accordance with the MOU. As part of the planning process, the Planning Team will use the RBA framework to design the system for accountability and monitor results from the system level down to the program level using a RBA Report Card and data system.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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 review of the credentials clearly indicated that the project partners and the project director bring extensive experience to the PH initiative. Based on this information, the reader is convinced that the team and the directors has the capabilities to secure and integrate an array of public and private funding streams to accomplish the specific community goals. For example, the budget features nearly [REDACTED] in local matching funds from the school district alone.

The budget will support a scaling-up of outreach, project coordination, expertise to help integrate data management and program delivery, efforts to build the collaborative culture required, and local evaluation. The Steering Committee has ambitious plans to scale up project activities to implement the full cradle to career Continuum and eventually expand the project to reach more Marshalltown schools and neighborhoods over the next 3-5 years. (pgs.44-45)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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 Comprehensive Early Learning Network Planning will work on a number of key initiatives and will use the same process as the larger Rogers Promise Neighborhood, Mark Friedman's Results Based Accountability (RBA) Framework, for the planning and implementation process. However, the focus of this effort will be the adoption of a common set of expectations of school readiness which will become generally known, taught and measured across the community. This will create a community system of early learning that is of a high quality and accessible to all children in the Rogers neighborhood.

This planning will build upon previous activity in this arena including the already existing Early Childhood Coordinating Group, the current effort to train all day care (center and home based) and Pre-K providers in use of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) philosophy and techniques, and the Spread the Words-Read by 3rd campaign for grade level reading School Readiness Task Force. The goal of the planning process will be aligning the efforts of all early learning providers with a single accepted set of results and indicators related

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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:

None

Weaknesses:

Did not address.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

There is not any current effort to coordinate school age programming and opportunities in the area of the arts and humanities. The work in Rogers neighborhood would be the first of its kind in the community and would serve as a model for future work in creating a richer environment for children and youth. The applicant will partner with the local Arts Council to develop opportunities for children to develop their art potential.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

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:

None

Weaknesses:

Did not address.

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215P120062)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Selection Criteria 1	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Selection Criteria 2	20	20
Quality of Project Services		
1. Selection Criteria 3	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Selection Criteria 4	45	45
Sub Total	100	100
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP 5	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CPP 6	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CPP 7	1	0
Sub Total	5	3
Total	105	103

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - PN Panel - 5: 84.215P

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215P120062)

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:

One of the strengths of the Roger s Promise Neighborhood Project is that it defines the problem with the ethnic, poverty, crime, housing, and family and community support and general/neighborhood academic needs from elementary, middle, and high schools assessment data being identified as needs improvement by Iowa Department of Education. As the application shows on p. 5, the local descriptive statistics facts charts and information depicts high concentration of poverty with limited access to resources. are consistent with other national statistics to show the relevance of noted problems with initiative. Another strength of applicant is addressing the benefits of empowering this community and capitalizing on its previous strength to address workforce support outcomes along with student success to address the existing problem.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. Geographic Area Description

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly defined the geographical area as the fifth poorest school community in the state and has been identified by the U.S. Department of Education as a school /district area in need of assistance. Geographic area is comprised with risk factors of low maternal education, poverty, single-parent households, and parents whose primary language is not English. The applicant shows the geographical area promise in revitalizing the workforce for immigrant and ethnic population to refocus economic and academic services and supports.

Sub Question

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: 20

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:

This is a good use of education results with continuum of solutions linked to school indicators such as Preschool to K appropriate functioning across multiple domains, participation in center-based or formal home-based early learning, proficiency in content areas, attendance, graduation, postsecondary readiness on p. 11-14. In addition, the district leveraged significant neighborhood community conversations for active connectedness with early childhood programming and Promise Neighborhood data monitoring and routinely providing reports to increase student achievement. On p.19, the Rogers Promise Neighborhood Planning Structure will involve 4 key working groups. On p. 45 the applicant describes the Adoption of All-American City Grade Level Reading Community Solutions action plan.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

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 p.10, the applicant used a well-designed Mark Friedman s Result Based Accountability Framework with continuum of solutions on p. 10 addressing high-quality early learning programs and services, educational reform linked to improved educational outcomes preschool to 12th grade, college-career programs, and family and community supports to understand what it takes to develop a replicate model for its community. Utilizing community feedback, the applicant decided to focus on combating poverty through improved education (early childhood, every child graduates, and postsecondary and lifelong learning) strands.

Sub Question

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 applicant indicated long-term history of interagency collaborating partner agencies such as Business Education Alliance, Education Partnership, Safe Schools / Healthy Students, Spread the Word-Read By Third, and others from out of town collaborative. As demonstrated by the chart breakdown of leveraging assets on p. 21-22 and 32. Another strength is involving partners in planning efforts to link efforts to outcome measures ensuring greater success of implementation. The applicant has a strong referral process in place to ensure quality outreach to students and their families with services.

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:

The applicant on p. 24-25 described clear needs assessment from established partners, along with capacity team to oversee the analysis with describing indicators, and the process to ensure all students and their parents receive tier level of services. . The applicant described the existing capacity, analysis integration and intent of how it will be used to connect individual students to services as well as to examine patterns of issues and service gaps.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

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:

The applicant presents on p. 28 -29 that is evidence-based support to help work groups such as the Mark Friedman s Results Accountability Framework and PolicyLink necessary to support the residents and students of these high need communities. Applicant presents lists of interventions from continuum of solutions based on evidence-based interventions led by MICA. The evidence maintains fidelity in that it demonstrated academic and community impact.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. 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 applicants capacity on p. 31 is aligned with vision demonstrate a strong commitment to and a long history of working with the neighborhood and its residents, as well as with other service providers in the neighborhood. The lesson learned on p. 38 was highlighted to ensure the organization successful experience in coordinating several interventions within the geographic area, and has a track record of success of working with the intentions of this grant.

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

Sub Question

improvement, and accountability.

Strengths:

The applicant's management on p. 38 has experience administering needs assessments, conducting pertinent information, and analyzing cross-functional data. The management team has extensive experience with collecting, analyzing, and using data for decisions for decision-making, improvement, and accountability measures throughout the application for quality assurance. On p. 28, the applicant presents a chart demonstrating lesson learned through programs and evidence based programs and literature.

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 applicant described how its vision and partnerships are connected for addressing problem, theory of change on p. 40 and indicators of need. Experiences include numerous national research projects of data management systems, collaborative relationships. The applicant proposes to use RBA framework linked to continuum of services to increase appropriate outcomes of at-risk students and their families and community. Lesson learned at conference sponsored by the Harlem Children Zone and Policy Link.

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:

The applicant on p. 41 has been successful in bringing interagency collaboration through MOU of aligning partner vision, theory of action to work under a collective theory of change to build capacity around strategic programs and solutions. On p. 44, lesson learned from Harlem's Children Zone and Policy Link and capacity-building of PD/management on p.42 show funding streams with public and private funders in local matching funds in support of scale-up outreach, project coordination, and expertise.

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's proposed plan with Comprehensive Early Learning Network Planning has existing childhood coordinating group capacity efforts. Applicant uses community feedback to focus on combating poverty through improved education such as Start Sooner (early childhood education for all children).

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 0

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:

The applicant on p. 50 will focus on cultural experiences. The applicant demonstrated a direct link to cultural art experiences available in the neighborhood.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

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: 0

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