

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2018 12:37 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (U282T180010)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance of the proposed project</b>		
1. Significance	35	32
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	26
<b>Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	12
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	89
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Empowering Families/Individuals</b>		
1. Families/Individuals	5	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	3
<b>Total</b>	105	92

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282T-AP 2 - 1: 84.282T

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

Applicant: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (U282T180010)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance of the proposed project

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 35 points):

(1) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project;

(2) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;

(3) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement; and

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

#### Strengths:

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), in partnership with the Tennessee Charter School Center, proposed to create and launch the Charter School Facility Center (CSFC) – an entity dedicated to helping charter schools access better and less expensive facilities and facility financing (pgs. e22-e23). Four initial projects were identified, including facility data transparency, replicating USDA financing success for rural charter schools, local capacity building through technical assistance, and accessing district space (pg. e37).

Project 1, facility data transparency, focuses on compiling a state-by-state database of relevant information about each facility project (pg. e45). NAPCS will provide dissemination through state charter support organizations and SchoolBuild, which should provide information to a wide audience of schools, policy makers, finance professionals, and charter support organizations. The applicant provided a solid argument this proposed project will result in system change or improvement in at least five states (pg. e45).

Project 2, replicating USDA financing success for rural charter schools, will provide schools, finance professionals policy-makers, and USDA officials invaluable insight into charter school financing via Industry Metrics (pg. e46). There is high potential for generalizing from the findings or results of this proposed project to all states and the District of Columbia, as well as a robust mechanism for disseminating the results of this project in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies. This proposed project is likely to build local capacity and result in system change and improvement (pg. e46).

Project 3, local capacity building through technical assistance, is a series of local presentations and content addressing a variety of topics about facilities and facility financing (pg. e47). The NAPCS proposes to follow the Tennessee Charter School Center's 2017 methodology.

Project 4, accessing district space, proposes to provide a published report/toolkit detailing the various tools and resources that California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) has developed for maximizing charter school opportunities to access district space (pg. e49). NAPCS recognizes the legislative environment in California is unique to that state. However, they provided a compelling discussion of how other states and school operators can benefit from the toolkit, as well as a valuable dissemination method with 1-1 consultations with charter school leaders and/or charter support organization staff (pg. e49).

**Weaknesses:**

In project 1, NAPCS proposes to complete research in only one state the first year of the grant, and two states each in the second and third years of the grant, bringing the total states that benefit from this grant proposal to five. Given there are 44 states and the District of Columbia with charter school laws, this project benefits very few. There is no information supporting the potential for generalizing from the findings or results, or how the remaining 39 states and the District of Columbia could access or benefit from this project, as the applicant stated the baseline or benchmark comparison to current industry norms and trends would only be in their state (pg. e45).

In project 3, the Charter School Facility Center (CSFC) proposes to host five meetings in partner states the first year of the grant. The states will be identified via request for proposal and the charter support organization that can demonstrate the highest anticipated charter school turnout will be selected (pg. e48). There is no information supporting the potential for generalizing from the findings or results, or how the remaining 39 states and the District of Columbia could access or benefit from this project. In addition, the applicant did not provide any supporting information of the success of the Tennessee Charter School Center's 2017 pilot program to provide system change or improvement, or if it built local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services.

With future projects being determined throughout the 3-year grant, it is not clear whether or not these new (unknown) projects meet the four factors considered by the Secretary.

**Reader's Score: 32**

**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 the following factors (up to 30 points):**

**(1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c));**

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

**(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition; and**

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

**Strengths:**

NAPCS provided a sound rationale for its four proposed projects and corresponding activities (pgs. e39-e61), specifically identifying the number of charter schools that have to postpone opening because of facility or facility financing issues (pg. e39) and the number of charter schools that spend a significant amount of money per pupil on facilities rather than in the classroom (pg. e39).

The goals, objectives, and outcomes provided in the narrative (pgs. e55-e56) and logic model (pg. e139) appear clearly specified and measurable. However, it appears the co-sharing project needs additional information (pg. e139).

The NAPCS intends to use its existing relationships with charter support organizations, conferences and convenings, state and local technical assistance workshops, its website, and several other mechanisms to disseminate information on the proposed projects (pgs. e27, e59-60).

**Weaknesses:**

The NAPCS proposed projects include working with other entities (e.g., Tennessee Charter School Center, CSSA, Rural Charter School Collaborative, etc.), but minimal outcome information is provided in this application that supports the

methods of these entities are exceptional approaches (pgs. e46-e49). Additional information about the outcomes of these groups would be helpful.

It is not clear how NAPCS will ensure its methods of dissemination will support further development or replication. For example, will NAPCS continue to research state information for SchoolBuild.

In addition, with future projects being determined throughout the 3-year grant, it is not clear whether or not these new (unknown) projects meet the factors considered by the Secretary.

**Reader's Score: 26**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 15 points):**

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

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and**

**(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

#### **Strengths:**

The NAPCS demonstrated the proposed project manager has significant experience and success managing multi-year federal grants (pgs. e61, e91-e92) and the NAPCS itself has experience with project management systems similar to those needed for the proposed projects and activities (pg. e61). The timeline for completion of proposed projects 1 – 4 is ambitious and appears to be realistic (pgs. e63-e66) and the proposed budget appears reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (pgs. e6, e172-e181).

Selected project partner, Tennessee Charter School Center, has a signed MOU with NAPCS to participate in this grant (pgs. e110-e111) providing demonstrated commitment to the implementation and success of the project.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The NAPCS proposed project task end dates (i.e., 9/30/18, 9/30/19, 9/30/20) are the same as the deadlines for the external evaluations of project outputs (pgs. e63-e66). Meeting the external evaluation deadline would be highly unlikely if a project manager did not finish his/her project task well prior to the end date.

While there are project applications for Rural Charter School Collaborative (pg. e146) and California Charter Schools Association (pg. e148), there are not specific documents or letters demonstrating commitment of these partners to their respective project activities.

With future projects being determined throughout the 3-year grant, it is not clear whether or not these new (unknown) projects meet the factors considered by the Secretary.

**Reader's Score: 12**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 10 points):

(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability;

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and

(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

### Strengths:

The resumes of key staff at NAPCS and partner organizations (pgs. e68-e73, e82-e99) demonstrate relevant training and experience of the project director, principal investigator, and key project personnel.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 10 points).

### Strengths:

The selected evaluation firm, JM Consulting Inc., has extensive experience with federal grant evaluations, including Building Charter School Quality project, BAEO's Project Clarion, Arizona Charter School Association's Charter Starter program, and U.S. Charter Resource Center as hosted by AIR (pgs. e73-e74). The outlined evaluation plan (pgs. e75-e79) is objective and clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project.

### Weaknesses:

With future projects being determined throughout the 3-year grant, it is not clear whether or not the evaluation of the new (unknown) projects meet the factors considered by the Secretary.

Reader's Score: 9

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Empowering Families/Individuals

1. Competitive Preference Priority--Empowering Families and Individuals To Choose a High-Quality Education That Meets Their Unique Needs (Up to 5 points)

Projects that are designed to address increasing access to educational choice for one or more of the following groups of children or students:

(i) Children or students with disabilities.

(ii) English learners.

(iii) Students who are Indians, as defined in section 6151 of the ESEA.

(iv) Children or students in communities served by rural local educational agencies.

**Strengths:**

The applicant proposed four initial projects, including one project on replicating USDA financing success for rural charter schools in six selected states (Arizona, California, Colorado Michigan, Minnesota, and Texas). Documentation supporting this project included (1) anecdotal information from sessions dedicated to rural schools at the National Charter School Conference having a significant focus on Indian education (pg. e50) and (2) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) transaction data indicating the percentage of investment going to charter schools in specific states (pg. e25).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide any documentation supporting its statement that replicating USDA financing success for rural charter schools would increase educational choice for students who are Indians (pg. e24). There was no documentation providing the specific population of students who are Indians in the target states, the percentage of students who are Indians currently attending charter schools in the target states or the anticipated increase in the number of students who are Indians choosing to attend charter schools after project completion, the number of proposed schools in communities serving primarily students who are Indians, the quality of schools in communities serving primarily students who are Indians, the number of proposed schools in rural communities, etc.

In addition, entities eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development do not all meet the definition of rural local educational agency as defined in the Notice (i.e., Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program or Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program). The applicant did not provide any supporting documentation indicating the number of charter schools that qualify and/or participate in the SRSA or RLIS program.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

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**Status:**             Submitted  
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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/14/2018 07:13 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (U282T180010)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance of the proposed project</b>		
1. Significance	35	32
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	26
<b>Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	10
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	86
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Empowering Families/Individuals</b>		
1. Families/Individuals	5	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	4
<b>Total</b>	105	90

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282T-AP 2 - 1: 84.282T

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

Applicant: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (U282T180010)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance of the proposed project

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 35 points):

(1) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project;

(2) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;

(3) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement; and

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

#### Strengths:

1. (1) The potential for generalizability of the research findings is sizeable. The sole focus of the application is to “capture and disseminate” existing best practices as well as identify, vet and disseminate new and innovative solutions to charter school facilities funding. E30, e37 The applicant has a proven 14 year track record of producing and disseminating information and products to the audiences identified in this proposal as well as the communication vehicles for doing so. e28-29 The applicant has established avenues for dissemination to the key charter school financing stakeholders identified in this proposal including a large data base. e36. Additionally, the applicant plans to enhance their existing avenues for dissemination, such as SchoolBuild, to broaden their reach in disseminating information. E35

(2) Dissemination will occur using existing channels established by National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. e35-36 SchoolBuild, social media, websites, PR, existing partnerships and databases, all presently used vehicles making usage statistics available for future comparisons. E35-36 SchoolBuild appears to be a natural portal as it is already developed, utilized, and houses significant information and tools for charter school start -ups, including some financial and resource recommendations. E35 The applicant proposes driving more traffic to this site as it becomes more robust. E34 Later in the application, the applicant also identifies dissemination as a key role for the Advisory Board Members and the user group. E42-43

The audience the applicant has identified for dissemination of the information, represent key stakeholders in the charter school finance arena. e33-34

It is difficult to ascertain from the application where the Center be located. Is it a physical center, or in name and function only?

(3) The applicant will disseminate proven, vetted best practices that have been pre-identified and selected specifically for effectiveness, E37 increasing the likelihood that if adopted and followed with fidelity, other entities will meet with the same success. (California, and rural districts using USDA Rural Development funds).

(4) The applicant has selected four specific innovative projects to highlight the first year, that include how local charter operators are building their own financial capacity. E38-39 The applicant also proposes that disseminating best practices more broadly will result in more charter schools accessing these best practices. The applicant is relying on beefing up existing communication vehicles e29, including their annual conference as well as adding additional activities mentioned later in the grant, 52-53, including the establishment of an Advisory Board, AFP, e42-43 and user group, to advise nationally and then network locally. E39

**Weaknesses:**

Considering the number and complexity of deliverables in this application, the applicant and partner could have provided more detail on their capacity to deliver the proposed products.

e45 The applicant proposes to add two states per year to SchoolBuild's existing data base. How those states will be selected, whether they are representative of the larger charter school landscape, and why they are being selected is information not included in this application. Additionally, there is no explanation why only 6 states total will be added to the data base and how this will impact the national landscape of charter school advocates needing to access the information.

**Reader's Score:** 32

**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 the following factors (up to 30 points):

(1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c));

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

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition; and

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

**Strengths:**

2(1) The rationale for the project is addressed in a number of places including under this specific item. I.e.

e39 discusses delays in school openings due to finance challenges, per pupil funding of facilities, percentage of schools with capital projects and cost,

e31-32 discusses the value of charter school properties and leases, and interest rate reduction.

E66 again refers to rationale for the project and accompanying statistics.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant cites the structure of the National Charter Legal Action Fund as an example of rationale, the fact that a part of this application is based on the success of this board and network (community of practice) of charter school lawyers. This doesn't seem to be a good fit here. E40

The applicant also cites two of the "innovative" projects they will disseminate (USDA the first year, and credit enhancement programs in year 2 or 3) as rationale. The specific meaning of rationale is a set of reasons or the logical basis for a course of action or a particular belief. The answer to this question does appear in the application but it does not seem to be addressed sufficiently in this section. This reader does believe the applicant included compelling statistics in support of the project design in other sections of the application. 3 pts

(2) Answered from pages e41-56. The goals listed do not appear to match completely the goals listed on e30. Maybe just an oversight, but the 2nd goal is missing "the disseminate new, innovative solutions as well as the existing best practices..."

The "measurable objectives" e41 aren't written in a measurable format perhaps because the applicant has included more detail in the "outputs" and "outcomes" section. e53-54. All but two of the outcomes appear to be measurable. The mechanism to measure each is not specified but assumed by this reader. Two outcomes however, appear to be difficult to measure: See an increase in the measure off usefulness of the data by facility professionals; See an increased amount

of enhanced technical capacity regarding facilities at the school level; 6 pts

The applicant does not address how this proposal represents an "exceptional" approach.

**Reader's Score: 26**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 15 points):**

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

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and**

**(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

#### **Strengths:**

The project manager is well credentialed and with a proven track record.

The applicant acknowledges that there will be efforts to seek private investment to sustain this project after year 3.

The applicant proposes a "hybrid" approach whereby they have pre-selected the initial innovative, best practices to disseminate. The Advisory Council will then assist in selecting the best practices in year 2 and 3. The applicant indicates they wrote the Management Plan so each year is independent, in the unlikely inevitability that funding might be cut in future years.

The applicant has developed and utilized a system for scheduling, time management and budgeting systems with the Legal Action Fund and plans to use the same system for this grant, if successfully funded. E61-62

#### **Weaknesses:**

3(1) The Project Management Chart e63-66 provides a broad overview of project tasks, milestones and timelines for completion. There is less specificity defining responsibilities of each entity. Additionally, the applicant did not address how the management plan would assure the project would be completed within budget. There is no reference to the budget, nor any discussion as to why it is reasonable.

The National Alliance will serve as the grantee for receipt of grant funding, and will then contract with TCSC and other CSO's to deliver different aspects of the grant. E62 Yet, in the budget section of the appendices, TCSC is described as a co-applicant for the grant, and key partner. E174 The Management Plan could more clearly define the roles of TCSC e62, Momentum Research e64, and CCSA e62-64.

The Project Team is referred to in the Management Plan but not mentioned prior to this in the application and no responsibilities are included in this section. E65 The budget on e172 does list 6 current Alliance employees who will be paid out of this grant. It is not clear why the Alliance employees appear to be fulfilling specific roles that would ideally fall under the Project Director job description, and at a cost of \$145,000 just for the first year alone. See budget e176.

(2) This section asks to what extent are the costs reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of this proposed project. This question is not addressed by the applicant. 0 points

Although this reader understands the possible significance of this project if funded, that is not what is being asked for in this question. e66. The applicant indicates that Year One activities include the identification and development of four pre-identified best practices and the dissemination of these best practices to the field. They indicate this is an average cost of

\$200,000 per project though there are no figures to support this average cost estimate. The applicant states that there is an estimated cost of \$200,000 on average for each activity and that as such, this is a reasonable value for the cost of the project. There is no evidence or rationale upon which to base this assumption. Nor has the applicant provided any cross-walking of budget to objectives, design and potential significance.

(3) The applicant indicates that their organization has supported schools in the past as they have sought assistance in charter school funding issues. They have authored a key research paper included in Appendix E9 on the federal role in facilities funding. They refer to two initiatives they are involved in that are not described sufficiently here: new sector development community of practice in Alabama and Mississippi, and model law rankings. E67 The reader is to extrapolate that because the organization has supported schools through these avenues, this is the indication that they are committed to seeing this grant to successful completion.

The TCSC is responsible for managing two of the four best practices highlight in year one of this application. They piloted one of these projects last year and apparently this is the evidence that they are committed to the continued success and expansion of this project through this grant application. 5 points

**Reader's Score: 10**

#### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 10 points):**

**(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability;**

**(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and**

**(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

#### **Strengths:**

(1) Both partner organizations have hiring practices that are designed to meet this factor. The applicant specifically addressed the National Alliance's practices. That organization has set yearly recruitment goals specifically for attracting people of color during hiring process. Their practices include targeted job postings, seeking recommendations from current staff of color. Their present employment team consists of 75% from underrepresented groups. They note that TCSC shares similar diversity practices and values, notably their present employment team consists of 86% from underrepresented groups.

(2) The project director is highly qualified for this position with an impressive resume of significant accomplishments within the national charter school arena.

(3) Key personnel are all uniquely qualified for the positions they are serving in. The team members serving alongside the Project Director from the National Alliance are currently employed there and providing the same kinds of services and expertise they will in turn be providing this project if funded. The partner organization, and evaluation purveyor are also qualified for the roles they will fulfill with the grant.

#### **Weaknesses:**

Considering the national scope of this proposal, the applicant does not provide rigorous strategies for ensuring underrepresented groups are targeted for job postings. The practices included in the application are primarily passive.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 10 points).**

#### **Strengths:**

The consulting firm selected to evaluate this grant has significant prior experience in this capacity and with charter school federal grants specifically. The applicant specifies that the evaluation contractor will “validate” the performance measures, meaning there could be further (and necessary) refinement to the “outputs” proposed by applicant. Under data collection and reporting, the applicant lists data collection methods to be used.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The evaluation design does not address how the potential number of stakeholders to be included in the evaluation activities, could effect the evaluation methods and results.

**Reader's Score: 9**

### **Priority Questions**

#### **Competitive Preference Priority - Empowering Families/Individuals**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority--Empowering Families and Individuals To Choose a High-Quality Education That Meets Their Unique Needs (Up to 5 points)**

**Projects that are designed to address increasing access to educational choice for one or more of the following groups of children or students:**

- (i) Children or students with disabilities.**
- (ii) English learners.**
- (iii) Students who are Indians, as defined in section 6151 of the ESEA.**
- (iv) Children or students in communities served by rural local educational agencies.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant presents details on one specific population to be targeted with this proposal, namely Native Americans, who represent a significant population that their organization's services have benefited in the past. The applicant's proposal is based on building local capacity nationwide for charter school operators so that they are more successful accessing facilities funding and thereby creating and expanding more high quality education choices for families. It can be assumed that if they do indeed reach their target audience, the national charter school operators, they will indeed be supporting schools in serving their local populations, whatever their demographic.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The application would be stronger if it also addressed the other groups specifically listed in this competitive preference priority considering the national scope of the proposal.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/14/2018 07:13 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2018 06:04 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (U282T180010)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance of the proposed project</b>		
1. Significance	35	33
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	26
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<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Empowering Families/Individuals</b>		
1. Families/Individuals	5	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	4
<b>Total</b>	105	93

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282T-AP 2 - 1: 84.282T

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

Applicant: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (U282T180010)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance of the proposed project

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 35 points):

- (1) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project;
- (2) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;
- (3) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement; and
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

#### Strengths:

The National Alliance has access to and existing relationships with large organizations such as the Alliance of Public Charter School Attorneys. The project based approach to implementation has the potential to integrate multiple layers of solutions-based activities (e37).

#### Weaknesses:

The CSFC priorities may take more time than planned since this organization will be created upon award of this grant (e40). Also, since there are four projects being launched simultaneously, there needs to be more clarity related to implementation barriers such as communication and dissemination strategies (e37).

Reader's Score: 33

### 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 the following factors (up to 30 points):

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c));
- (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition; and
- (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

#### Strengths:

The National Alliance utilizes a facility center logic model; the rationale is captured within the research regarding charter schools delayed openings and lack of funding for facilities or adequate facilities (e39).

**Weaknesses:**

The National Alliance replicates other large, nationally positioned organizations such as the National Charter School Legal Action Fund but not sure this is an exceptional approach to the problem (e39). Furthermore, although this strategy worked for the legal sector, it is not clear that this is the best or most relevant approach for facilities issues.

**Reader's Score: 26**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 15 points):**

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

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and**

**(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**Strengths:**

The National Alliance makes a compelling argument that the budget of \$200K per project over multiple years seems to be reasonable, given the potential significance of each project (e66). Furthermore, the project management table, (e63-e66), provides a detailed set of project tasks, milestones, timelines, and responsibilities.

**Weaknesses:**

There are multiple projects being managed by different entities/organizations and the expectation is that all will be completed simultaneously. For example, the first year implementation will be completed by September 30, 2019 (e64-e65). The National Alliance has not made it clear that this is a realistic timeline or if completion dates should be staggered to allow for more focused energy on each project.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 10 points):**

**(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability;**

**(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and**

**(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**Strengths:**

The project director, Mark Medema, has an excellent background and expertise in the field and thus, has already established his credibility (e69). He also has experience and success with facilities funding and implementation of innovative facility strategies (e69).

**Weaknesses:**

There needs to be more emphasis on finding individuals from traditionally under-represented groups to play larger roles on this project, particularly given the national scope of work (e68). Some of the strategies listed are passive, i.e. diversity job boards and adding a diversity recruitment statement.

**Reader's Score:** 9

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

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 10 points).**

**Strengths:**

The National Alliance plans to outsource the evaluation to a non-partial 3rd party, JM Consulting Inc. (e73). JMC has assembled a team that has experience in federal grant evaluations, including charter school projects (e74).

**Weaknesses:**

It is not clear if the particular evaluation design will be relevant to this project. In other words, this is a multi-layered, multi-project design that will need input from a number of stakeholders. There needs to be a more explicit discussion of how JMC will insure the use of high-quality data collection, analysis and reporting (e77).

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority - Empowering Families/Individuals**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority--Empowering Families and Individuals To Choose a High-Quality Education That Meets Their Unique Needs (Up to 5 points)**

**Projects that are designed to address increasing access to educational choice for one or more of the following groups of children or students:**

- (i) Children or students with disabilities.**
- (ii) English learners.**
- (iii) Students who are Indians, as defined in section 6151 of the ESEA.**
- (iv) Children or students in communities served by rural local educational agencies.**

**Strengths:**

The organization has research from USDA supporting the lack of access for rural charter schools to public and private funding for facilities (Replicating USDA Financing Success for Rural Charter Schools, e24-25). The organization already leads an informal organization called the Rural Charter School Collaborative and thus, has familiarity with key stakeholders and advocates of rural charter schools (e26). The National Alliance has a national presence and support from both federal and state charter schools and advocacy groups (e28).

**Weaknesses:**

Although the USDA finances billions of dollars of rural development projects each year, fewer than 20% of the nation's rural charter schools have successfully financed through this program. The project does not directly address how its research will support a stronger success rate of rural schools getting this financing to fund facilities (e25).

**Reader's Score:** 4

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**Status:** Submitted

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