

**American History and Civics Education National Activities Program  
2021 Competition Review**

**(CFDA) 84.422B**

Applicant :Street Law: Talking About Local Current and Contested Issues in Schools	Application Number U422B2021 0013_ _ _
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Summary Ratings		
	Maximum Points	Score
<b>A. Quality of the Project Design</b>	30	30
<b>B. Need for the Project</b>	20	20
<b>C. Quality of Management Plan</b>	20	20
<b>D. Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>	30	29
<b>Selection Criteria Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>	99
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>	5	5
<b>Invitational Priority #1</b>	Yes/No	Yes
<b>Invitational Priority #2</b>	Yes/No	Yes
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	104

## **Part I. Selection Criteria**

### **A. Quality of the Project Design (30 points)**

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:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(Maximum Points 30)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_

#### **Overview:**

The applicant proposes a project design which demonstrates a detailed rationale for funding and implementation. The project components are well designed and aligned with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and will provide high quality educational programs and services for teachers and students. The project provides a workable approach to address the priorities for the competition. The comprehensive logic model includes program objectives and the methodology to meeting the priorities of innovative instruction and professional development in American history, civics and government and geography for school districts which are exceptional.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

- (i) The applicant includes a logic model which presents the alignment between the problem/needs, goals, inputs, resources, professional development, and student activities, short-term and mid-term outputs, and outcomes. The proposal presents a clear rationale for why the project should be funded. The applicant thoroughly designed a project grounded in up-to-date research and presents a plan to scale up the project in all 24 Maryland school districts. (e194) Partnerships have been confirmed with letters of support from the four MD school districts who will use the program this year if funded. (e192).
- (ii) The proposal clearly describes a quality plan for project implementation and seeks to improve student achievement and rigorous academic standards by using current educational priorities that exceed state standards in the history, civics, and government subject matter areas. TALCCS will professional development on promoting discussion of current event issues and civil exchanges in classrooms especially for underserved student populations by providing professional development for teachers and localized curricular

resource development to build student literacy skills and improve civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes for Maryland students. (e20)

(i) Weaknesses

There are no weaknesses noted.

**B. Need for the Project (20 points)**

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (ii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.
- (iii) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.
- (iv) 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.

(Maximum Points 20)

Reader's Score:

**Overview:**

The applicant demonstrates a clear need for the project and clearly identifies the problems to be addressed. The applicant outlines grant activities that will address specific weaknesses in services and identified gaps. The application describes how the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population and other identified needs.

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

Applicant provides data to support the need for more history and civics training in the target area. (e35) This project will focus particularly on underserved populations, with attention to Black and Hispanic/Latino students, students who receive FARMs, English language learners, and students in rural communities. (e31) Most recent data provided suggests that students are performing at below proficient levels.

This project will specifically address three major gaps: (1) civic opportunity and civic achievement gaps for students of color and low-income students, (2) educator fears regarding bringing current and controversial issues into classrooms, and (3) the lack of high-quality professional development opportunities for social studies teachers. (e41) The proposal addresses how they intend to fill those gaps.

The Street Law project will address the gap between student opportunity and student achievement by (1) prioritizing schools and communities with significant populations of students of color and of low-income families; (2) providing teachers with professional development on research-based strategies for current and contested issues discussions; (3) providing teachers with regular instructional support, check-ins, and reflection opportunities; (4) supporting teachers to produce culturally responsive, locally relevant curricular materials that are informed by student voice; and (5) creating opportunities for students to civically engage with community members through community deliberations. (e41)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

**C. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)**

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 following factors:

- (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.
- (ii) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(Maximum Points 20)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_

**Overview:**

TALCCS with Street Law leading the project have a robust management plan to ensure that project's objectives will be achieved on time and within budget. Responsibilities are clearly defined and include timelines for accomplishing those tasks. The project has clear milestones for the three years of the proposal.

### **Supporting Statements:**

#### Strengths:

Street Law will put in place a robust project management team with clearly articulated goals, measurable objectives and expected outcomes and processes that ensure that Street Law collaborates effectively externally and internally and that DOE funds are used wisely. The components are project staffing, partner communication and collaboration, Street Law internal collaboration, financial management, evaluation feedback and a project timeline and defined milestones. (e55)

Street Law will convene regular meetings with its program staff and its partners to reflect on progress and revise or adjust plans. Street Law will put processes in place to obtain feedback on project progress, reflect on the data, and adjust project plans to improve performance as TALCCS is implemented. (e56)

#### Weaknesses

None

### **D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 points)**

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 following factors:

- (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (10 points)
- (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce promising evidence (as defined in this notice) about the project's effectiveness. (10 points)

- (iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies. (5 points)
- (iv) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings. (5 points)

(Maximum Points 30)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overview:**

The applicant provides a comprehensive evaluation plan that both evaluates the proposed project and allows for continuous feedback and course correction as needed. In addition, the detailed Logic Model addresses each of the goals, and connects the measurable objectives, which supports the evaluation plan. (e41)

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

(i) WEC will conduct a mixed methods evaluation of the project featuring both quantitative and qualitative. WEC will collect and analyze qualitative data, (e59), which will facilitate regular progress reporting on process and perceptions. A table summarizes the evaluation approaches for both implementation and effectiveness, connecting objectives, evaluation questions, data sources, and methods of analysis. (e64)

(ii) The applicant uses appropriate methods of evaluation that will yield performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. WEC will collect and analyze quantitative data to examine patterns related to performance feedback which will facilitate summative reporting on student outcomes to estimate impact of the initiative on student performance and potentially inform future interventions. (e60)

Weaknesses: Since this is a localized curriculum, this could affect future scalability both in MD and nationally.

**Overview**

The applicant incorporates racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives into teaching and learning. The TALCCS project incorporates teaching and learning practices that reflect the diversity, identities, histories, contributions, and experiences of all students.

Supporting Statements

## **Strengths**

Street Law will incorporate diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic perspectives into its professional development and curricular resources. TALCCS will address the civic opportunity gap and thus the civic achievement gap by providing professional development and curricular resource development support geared toward teachers teaching in low-income communities and underserved communities. (e34)

Student academic, civic, and social knowledge, skills, and attitudes will improve because of teachers providing more frequent opportunities to engage in high-quality discussions of current and contested issues. (e35)

## **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted

## **Part II. Competitive Preference Priority**

### **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (Up to 5 points).**

Under this priority, projects that include one or both of the following or

- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or
- b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights

(Maximum Points 5)

Reader's Score:

**Overview:** TALCCS addresses the Competitive Preference Priority both through research-based hands-on civic engagement activities offered to teachers and students and through content and instructional strategies that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. (e32)

**Supporting Statements:**

**Strengths:**

TALCCS innovative curriculum based is on meaningful civic engagement by students in their communities. Discussing current issues with community members is important to the functioning of our democracy. It helps community members engage in conversation, weigh evidence, consider competing views, form, and articulate opinions, and respond civilly to those who disagree. Community deliberations allow young people and adults in the community to work cooperatively toward a policy on a local issue that benefits the community. This type of activity can moderate some of the problems caused by political polarization because it brings together people across difference to discuss community-based issues and find common ground. (e33). Both priorities have been addressed.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

**Part III. Invitational Priority #1**

**Invitational Priority 1: Projects that Incorporate Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, and Linguistically Diverse Perspectives into Teaching and Learning. (Yes/No).**

Projects that incorporate teaching and learning practices that reflect the diversity, identities, histories, contributions, and experiences of all students and create inclusive, supportive, and identity-safe learning environments that--

- (a) Take into account systemic marginalization, biases, inequities, and discriminatory policy and practice in American history;
- (b) Incorporate racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives and perspectives on the experience of individuals with disabilities;
- (c) Encourage students to critically analyze the diverse perspectives of historical and contemporary media and its impacts;
- (d) Support the creation of learning environments that validate and reflect the diversity, identities, and experiences of all students; and



- (e) Contribute to inclusive, supportive, and identity-safe learning environments.

### **Overview**

The applicant incorporates racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives into teaching and learning. The TALCCS project incorporates teaching and learning practices that reflect the diversity, identities, histories, contributions, and experiences of all students.

Supporting Statements

### **Strengths**

- (i) Street Law will incorporate diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic perspectives into its professional development and curricular resources. TALCCS will address the civic opportunity gap and thus the civic achievement gap by providing professional development and curricular resource development support geared toward teachers teaching in low-income communities and underserved communities. (e34)
- (ii) Student academic, civic, and social knowledge, skills, and attitudes will improve because of teachers providing more frequent opportunities to engage in high-quality discussions of current and contested issues. (e35) All priorities were addressed.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted

## **Part III. Invitational Priority #2**

### **Invitational Priority 2: Promoting Information Literacy Skills (Yes/No).**

Projects that foster critical thinking and promote student engagement in civics education through professional development or other activities designed to support students in-

- (a) Evaluating sources and evidence using standards of proof;
- (b) Understanding their own biases when reviewing information, as well as uncovering and recognizing bias in primary and secondary sources;
- (c) Synthesizing information into cogent communications; and

(d) Understanding how inaccurate information may be used to influence individuals, and developing strategies to recognize accurate and inaccurate information.

**Overview:**

This project will promote information and literacy skills and meet the criteria of the Invitational Priority #2. by Implementing TALCCS into schools. This will foster critical thinking and promote student engagement in civics education, discussion of current events and participating in community deliberation meetings. (e31)

**Supporting Statements:**

**Strengths**

The project's measurable outcomes include an increase in literacy skills and improvement in listening and speaking skills. Students will become more engaged when discussing current topics where their opinions and ideas matter. These students will become more engaged in their social studies courses and improve their knowledge about U.S. history, civics, and government. Students will understand multiple perspectives and develop their arguments using text-based evidence and analyzing sources of bias, follow and are more likely to intend to vote. (e11)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**American History and Civics Education National Activities Program  
2021 Competition Review**

**(CFDA) 84.422B**

Applicant :Street Law Inc.	Application Number U422B2021 _ _ _
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Summary Ratings		
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<b>Selection Criteria Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>	99
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>	5	5
<b>Invitational Priority #1</b>	Yes/No	Yes
<b>Invitational Priority #2</b>	Yes/No	Yes
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	104

## **Part I. Selection Criteria**

### **A. Quality of the Project Design (30 points)**

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:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(Maximum Points 30)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Overview:**

The applicant proposes a project which demonstrates a rationale for funding and implementation. The project is well aligned with state standards of civics and history. Using the research from the 2019 Economic Policy Institute, the grant incorporates proven practices into its design. Due to the deepening of polarization in our society, the design includes a detailed method of working with school administrators as a necessary part of fostering goodwill and support in the district, school, and broader community. The applicant includes roles and responsibilities for school administrators, teachers and students and has submitted numerous handouts and activities that are grounded in research and previous successful and measurable outcomes in the areas of social studies as well as literacy.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

i) The applicant has designed a project that demonstrates a rationale that is grounded in up to date research and incorporates best practices (e20). The LOGIC Model located on (e194-e198), exhibits a detailed explanation of the needs that the project addresses such as the negative effects of political polarization, lack of high-quality civic education instruction, particularly in schools with young people of color and in low-income communities .

ii) The TALCCS project utilizes an exceptional approach to educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights by using research backed, hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students and through content and instructional strategies. These hands on activities directly teach students how issues are resolved in our democratic society through legal means.

##### Weaknesses:

None noted

**B. Need for the Project (20 points)**

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (ii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.
- (iii) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.
- (iv) 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.

(Maximum Points 20)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overview:**

The applicant demonstrates a clear need for the project and clearly identifies the problems to be addressed. Using best practices that have been identified through credible research, this project deliberately targets schools with demographics with underserved populations. The applicant describes an urgency for teaching a method of civil debate that fosters goodwill even in the midst of a recent deepened polarization in our society, which has entered into thinking and determining school curricula, state standards, and teacher professional development. (e22)

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

i) The school demographics for the four focus school districts are districts with the lowest income and the highest needs (e31). Applicant points out that educational research states that low-income and underserved schools are most impacted by the shortage of credentialed teachers.

ii) In an effort to compensate for a lack of resources, this grant targets school districts where teachers in these schools lack access to several proven practices that would improve their teaching. In the Economic Policy Institute's 2019 report it found that teachers who work in low income school districts do not have the following: subject-specific professional development, highly-cooperative environments, presenting at workshops, observing others, receiving one-one attention and support, reimbursement for conference and workshop fees, stipends for professional development participation, influence in the development of district instructional materials, and influence in determining professional development content. This grant proposes to include all of those elements in an effort to achieve equitable outcomes as well funded schools (e31).

iii) Combined demographics for the Baltimore County schools show 71% qualify for FARMs and in rural Frederick County, 33% qualify for FARMs(e 31 & e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

### C. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)

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 following factors:

- (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.
- (ii) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(Maximum Points 20)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Overview:**

The applicant proposes a comprehensive management plan to achieve the project's educational objectives on time and within budget, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This project provides for a supportive management plan that has outlined tasks, activities and timeline. Milestones for these activities are clearly laid out in phases. The budget is detailed and also allows for teacher leader compensation through stipends (e313-e325)

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

- i) This applicant has a strong proven track record managing grants and the funding therewith for 50 years, from many government and private funding sources, including The Department of Education. The applicant clearly articulates both its internal and external management processes. For example, their internal process begins with a launch meeting outlining program, finance, communications, and administrative staff to go over the timeline, roles, and to flag specific donor requirements. This is followed up by initially holding weekly management team meetings and then bi weekly ones.(e55) This level of oversight gives the project an organized inner structure that can then support communication and professional development and instruction at the district levels. The project has a management design that not only has a proven track record but continues to be data driven as seen by the fact that they have incorporated a 2017 Learning Policy Institute report. The report analyzed more than 35 studies of teacher professional development and found seven common traits of high-quality PD and the applicant has all of these components presented in the grant (e45). Additionally, there are numerous written curriculum material listed in Appendix A.
- ii) The applicant articulates Continuous activities that will yield supportive feedback, including a bi annual meeting of the student panel (e57). The project has a defined plan that takes place in

organized phases and includes school administrators and teacher leaders to continuously build capacity. The timetable for PDs is in a brief descriptor table on (e56)but is laid out in detail in the design section. Also there is a more detailed version in a few different places including the LOGIC Model (e194-197). The Maryland State Department of Education is already on board as indicated by their enthusiastic letter (e188) extolling the praises of the program. In addition to student panels and teacher leaders, the grant's design includes school administration roles, aiming to build internal and community-level support for the practices teachers implement in their classrooms. Professional development will include breakout sessions for school administrators to address how to communicate with parents and the community (e31).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

**D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 points)**

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 following factors:

- (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (10 points)
- (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce promising evidence (as defined in this notice) about the project's effectiveness. (10 points)
- (iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies. (5 points)
- (iv) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings. (5 points)



(Maximum Points 30)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overview:**

The applicant provides a comprehensive evaluation plan that evaluates the proposed project and allows for continuous feedback and course correction as needed. In addition, the detailed LOGIC Model addresses each of the goals and connects the measurable objectives, which supports the evaluation plan.(e57)

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

i) Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) will design and implement the project's evaluation activities. WEC is housed within the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's internationally renowned School of Education. will conduct mixed method evaluation, using both quantitative and qualitative analysis and organized around three guiding questions that reflect the evaluations of process, stakeholder perceptions, and outcomes and impacts (e58). A description of WEC is in appendix E

i) The applicant's methods of evaluation are both formative and summative, rife with data sources and methods of analysis. A detailed description that includes timetables is seen in the LOGIC Model on (e77) but also in other charts and descriptions that precede it beginning on (page e64 thru e76).

Weaknesses:

Adequate time needs to be given for reflection. The applicant does allow for reflection time in phase 2, however only convenes teacher leaders twice in order to adjust plans and make course corrections (e57).

**Part II. Competitive Preference Priority**

**Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (Up to 5 points).**

Under this priority, projects that include one or both of the following--

- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or

- b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

(Maximum Points 5)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overview:**

The applicant has attached an ample amount of evidence that demonstrates that hands on activities for both students and teachers that involve democratic deliberations, improve relationships between people with differing perspectives. The applicant provides civic communication strategies that promote a raised sense of confidence in discussions that involve political and legal issues (e219).

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

- a. The hands-on materials and programs presented are directly related to law cases as well as legal debate procedure such as moot court, socratic seminars, and philosophical chairs. The applicant provides supporting evidence that integrating these strategies and activities into the classroom promotes a deeper knowledge of civics and legal processes. Additionally, these discussion strategies help students to develop the disposition needed for effective political and civic engagement (e219).
  
- b. The project proposes to teach students the history and principles of The United States Constitution including The Bill of Rights. Students engage in the actual processes of how the amendments of the Bill of Rights are used to weigh evidence and consider competing views, form and articulate opinions, and ultimately respond civilly to those who disagree (e32-33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

### **Part III. Invitational Priority #1**

#### **Invitational Priority 1: Projects that Incorporate Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, and Linguistically Diverse Perspectives into Teaching and Learning. (Yes/No).**

Projects that incorporate teaching and learning practices that reflect the diversity, identities, histories, contributions, and experiences of all students and create inclusive, supportive, and identity-safe learning environments that--

- (a) Take into account systemic marginalization, biases, inequities, and discriminatory policy and practice in American history;
- (b) Incorporate racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives and perspectives on the experience of individuals with disabilities;
- (c) Encourage students to critically analyze the diverse perspectives of historical and contemporary media and its impacts;
- (d) Support the creation of learning environments that validate and reflect the diversity, identities, and experiences of all students; and
- (e) Contribute to inclusive, supportive, and identity-safe learning environments.

**Overview:** The TALCCS (Talking About Local Current and Contested Issues in Schools) program will impact more than 36,000 students by providing high-quality professional development to 452 teachers in all 24 Maryland school districts over its three-year life. The goal of this project is to ensure an increased frequency in discussions and deliberations around contested and current issues in Maryland classrooms and communities, with particular focus on serving diverse and under-resourced areas.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

- The applicant will prioritize schools and communities with significant populations of students of color and of low-income families (e43).
- The applicant will provide teachers with professional development on research-based strategies for current and contested issues discussions (e43).
- The applicant will support teachers to produce culturally responsive, locally relevant curricular materials that are informed by student voice (e43).
- The applicant will create opportunities for students to civically engage with community members through community deliberation (e43).

Weaknesses:

None noted

### **Part III. Invitational Priority #2**

#### **Invitational Priority 2: Promoting Information Literacy Skills (Yes/No).**

Projects that foster critical thinking and promote student engagement in civics education through professional development or other activities designed to support students in-

- (a) Evaluating sources and evidence using standards of proof;
- (b) Understanding their own biases when reviewing information, as well as uncovering and recognizing bias in primary and secondary sources;
- (c) Synthesizing information into cogent communications; and
- (d) Understanding how inaccurate information may be used to influence individuals, and developing strategies to recognize accurate and inaccurate information.

#### **Overview:**

Maryland's social studies civic standards and many district-level policies encourage teachers to integrate multiple perspectives and discuss current and contested issues in classrooms. However, fewer than 1 in 3 Maryland social studies teachers use current events regularly in their classrooms... The TALCCS project will address these needs by providing professional development and localized curricular resource development in order to build student literacy skills and improve civic knowledge, skill. Students will have to support their answers using evidence.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

Germane to the lesson activities (e 261, e76,e281-e287), is a method of understanding and procedure of how to use evidence based arguments to support or refute a plaintiff or defendant's case. Students are engaged in a process where they have to not only use evidence to support their own arguments but they also have to look at what the counter arguments are and find biases or errors. This facilitates critical thinking that addresses biases (within court cases—therefore primary sources), how information can be used to influence others, and clearly a mandate to synthesize information in order to create a cogent argument.

##### Weaknesses:

None noted.

**American History and Civics Education--Presidential and Congressional Academies  
Program  
2021 Competition Review**

**(CFDA) 84.422A**

Applicant Street Law	Application Number U422A2021 0 1 3
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Summary Ratings		
	Maximum Points	Score
<b>A. Quality of the Project Design</b>	30	30
<b>B. Need for the Project</b>	20	18
<b>C. Quality of Management Plan</b>	20	20
<b>D. Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>	30	28
<b>Selection Criteria Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>	96
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>	5	5
<b>Invitational Priority #1</b>	Yes/No	Yes
<b>Invitational Priority #2</b>	Yes/No	Yes
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	101

**Part I. Selection Criteria**

**A. Quality of the Project Design (30 points)**

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:

- (iii) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.
- (iv) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(Maximum Points 30) Reader's Score:   30  

**Overview:**

The application demonstrates the project design in exemplary ways. It identifies a clear and comprehensive rationale about facilitating discussions in classrooms to promote knowledge acquisition, literacy, a use of multiple perspectives, and improving civic attitudes (pg. e12). The teacher professional development centered around facilitating discussions and deliberations on contested and current issues is an exemplary approach to addressing diverse and underserved populations.

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

The proposed teacher professional development program will improve civic-minded instruction by providing teachers with facilitation skills to promote quality discourse, student literacy, history and civics knowledge, incorporation of multiple perspectives, and an increase in civic-mindedness (e.g., my voice matters) (pp. e18-19). The applicant's logic model on pages e73-77 is extremely detailed and presents the activities, outputs, short- and long-term outcomes. The proposed project is an exemplary and new approach to civic mindedness for students. Through classroom discussions, well facilitated through trained teacher-leaders, the proposed project design will meet the needs of all students, specifically those who are from diverse backgrounds or underserved populations.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**B. Need for the Project (20 points)**

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (v) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (vi) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.
- (vii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs.

(Maximum Points 20)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_ 18 \_\_\_

**Overview:**

The application demonstrates a need for the project in exemplary ways. It identifies gaps in teacher facilitation of classroom discussions and the polarization of dialogues around political issues (pg. e38). Those gaps are severe, and this project identifies and will address those completely. The services proposed in the application will incorporate those with the greatest need – students who are marginalized or who feel their voices do not matter (pp. e48-50).

**Supporting Statements:**

Strengths:

The applicant clearly articulates the need of teachers and students on conducting discourse and contested discussions in the classroom. The fears of educators are also presented with the appropriate opportunities in this proposal to address those fears (pp. e44-48). The evidence and data of the importance of conducting classroom conversations civilly and in an informative manner is presented in the application. The project will build on the curriculum with training on how to facilitate productive discussions and discourse. The project activities will have a great impact on not only the teachers in the classroom, but, if done correctly based on the PD, will have a positive impact on the students.

Weaknesses:

The literature cited identifies the current state of divisiveness in political discourse and contested topics (pg. e81), however, there is a lack of detail in connecting proper teacher facilitation of those topics with openness and understanding of student minds (pg. e49) or how discussions will change student behaviors and thoughts about those who disagree with them around contested topics.



### C. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)

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 following factors:

- (iii) 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.
- (iv) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(Maximum Points 20)

Reader's Score:   20  

#### **Overview:**

The applicant provides an exemplary management plan that identifies a highly qualified leadership team and clearly outlines the processes that will be put in place during the project (pg. e54). The continuous feedback from teachers on the professional development and the students on the impact of facilitation is throughout this entire project and is comprehensively integrated into project operation and potential project adjustments.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

The project's timeline starting on page e55, is clear and comprehensive as it identifies each responsible party for the activities and supports the completion of the intervention within the grant period. The Leadership team has excellent credentials (pp. e54-55) and is incorporated into the management plan activities that will ensure the project is implemented on time and within budget. The requested budget is reasonable and does not include any items that are not deemed as integrative to this project. Teacher professional development feedback on the quality and preparedness to use the tools of facilitation will be collected throughout the training and after classroom implementation (pg. e57). Student perceptions on the proper use of the classroom discussions and civic minded ideas will also be collected throughout implementation (pgs. e23, e57). Both teacher and student feedback will provide exceptional use of continuous improvements throughout the project.

##### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

#### D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 points)

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 following factors:

- (v) 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.
- (vi) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(Maximum Points 30)

Reader's Score: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Overview:**

The applicant presents an adequate evaluation plan for this project through the use of objective performance measures for the outcomes and the use of qualitative and quantitative data sources. Additionally, the application identifies numerous performance feedback opportunities and will permit periodic assessment on achieving project outcomes.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

The Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) has been retained as the external evaluator for the project (pg. e51). All 5 of the project outcomes are measurable (pp. e57-58) and will provide qualitative and quantitative data to assess this project. The Logic Model is detailed and provides strong alignment between project activities and the Evaluation Plan (pp. e73-77). There is a clear plan and timeline for collecting and analyzing data through the WEC that will document the progress towards short-term and long-term outcomes.

##### Weaknesses:

There is more detail needed to demonstrate adequate time in the timeline and evaluation plan for reflection on evaluation and adjustments as needed. The collection of feedback from teachers and students is integrated into the project activities, however, there is no indication of the time needed to digest and formulate a plan to address needed changes.

## **Part II. Competitive Preference Priority**

### **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (Up to 5 points).**

Projects that include one or both of the following:

- Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or
- Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

**Note:** The Department recognizes that the National Park Service Centennial occurred in 2016, and that consequently it may not be feasible to coordinate activities with this initiative. However, applicants can address this priority by proposing to develop innovative and comprehensive programs using other resources of the National Parks.

(Maximum Points 5)

Reader's Score:   5  

#### **Overview:**

The applicant's proposed project provides exemplary civic engagement activities through proper facilitation and conduct of classroom discussions. There is a heavy reliance in this project on hands-on activities through literacy and research, discussions and dialogue, and implementing civic attitude mind change throughout the community.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

The applicant uses hands on activities through community and classroom dialogues (pg. e33). Those discussions help community members engage in conversation while weighing evidence, consider conflicting viewpoints, forming and articulating opinions, and how to respond civilly to those who disagree (pg. e33). It is presented that discussions will bring people across differences and solve community-based issues and find common ground (pg. e33). The incorporation of current and contested issues and topics within the context of the Constitution and Bill of Rights will further support a common ground approach to civil discourse (pg. e34).

##### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

### **Part III. Invitational Priority #1**

#### **Invitational Priority 1: Projects that Incorporate Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, and Linguistically Diverse Perspectives into Teaching and Learning. (Yes/No).**

Projects that incorporate teaching and learning practices that reflect the diversity, identities, histories, contributions, and experiences of all students and create inclusive, supportive, and identity-safe learning environments that--

- (a) Take into account systemic marginalization, biases, inequities, and discriminatory policy and practice in American history;
- (b) Incorporate racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives and perspectives on the experience of individuals with disabilities;
- (c) Encourage students to critically analyze the diverse perspectives of historical and contemporary media and its impacts;
- (d) Support the creation of learning environments that validate and reflect the diversity, identities, and experiences of all students; and
- (e) Contribute to inclusive, supportive, and identity-safe learning environments.

#### **Overview:**

The applicant proposes an exemplary project that will incorporate teaching practices that focus on diversity, identities, and contributions of all students and create supportive and inclusive learning environments.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

The incorporation of frequent discussions about current and contested topics in classrooms will benefit students who are low-income or underserved the most (pg. 334). All perspectives, including diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic will be used to support the students' critical analysis of diverse historical and current viewpoints. Providing teachers with the skills and opportunities to support the creation of learning environments that are receptive to all students and reflect respect and inclusion is a strength of this proposal.

##### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

### **Part III. Invitational Priority #2**

#### **Invitational Priority 2: Promoting Information Literacy Skills (Yes/No).**

Projects that describe how they will foster critical thinking and promote student engagement in civics education through professional development or other activities designed to support students in--

- (a) Evaluating sources and evidence using standards of proof;
- (b) Understanding their own biases when reviewing information, as well as uncovering and recognizing bias in primary and secondary sources;
- (c) Synthesizing information into cogent communications; and
- (d) Understanding how inaccurate information may be used to influence individuals, and developing strategies to recognize accurate and inaccurate information.

#### **Overview:**

The applicant uses numerous examples that use information literacy skills within the project activities.

#### **Supporting Statements:**

##### Strengths:

The applicant uses examples of case law to address all aspects of the priority (pg. e79). The standards of proof, synthesizing biases, and identifying inaccurate information were completely addressed in the project activities (pg. 104).

##### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.