

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2023 04:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AZ Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University (S422B230002)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	25
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	25
Sub Total	100	95
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	2
Sub Total	5	2
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	3
Sub Total	7	3
Total	112	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - AHC-NA - 4: 84.422B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: AZ Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University (S422B230002)

Questions

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:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

To address the professional development needs of teachers within the target area, the applicant proposes a comprehensive project that will include the provision of timely and specific professional development that will lead to Civics, History and Media Literacy Specialization micro-credentials for participants as well as attainment of credits that can be stacked and used towards the MA degree (pgs. e17 – e18).

The professional learning curriculum (courses is historical reasoning, civic reasoning, civic discourse, etc.) coupled with the provision of micro-credentials represents an innovative approach in that the subsequent recognition of learning will “validate an individual's competency in a specific skill or area of expertise” (pgs. e18- e19).

The applicant's well thought out theory of change is demonstrated via a logic model which clearly depicts the project's rationale (page e29). The project's design and activities are based on best practice research and evidence (pgs. e19 – e20) and the logic model clarifies how short and long –term outcomes will be achieved.

Taken together, defining the parameters as they pertain to the project goal will likely help to ensure that objectives are achieved and desired outcomes are attained (e.g., a long-term outcome of increase in a teacher workforce that is committed and competent to teach civics, history, and media literacy, is possible due to the proposed inputs and activities as depicted in the logic model – page e29).

The applicant asserts in its abstract and narrative (page e244), that in years 2 and 3 of the proposed project, it will “expand statewide in Arizona, targeting teachers from rural parts of the state and schools with large populations of underserved students. Year 3 will expand nationwide, again targeting teachers who work with underserved students” (page e11). The project narrative includes specific details as to how this work will be done to ensure recruitment of the desired number of participants. Providing these details related to the recruitment and partnership activities in years 2, and 3 of the project (such as scope, sequence and duration of activities) underscores the likelihood of proposed impact of activities (50 more teachers in year 2, etc.), and strengthens the applicant's response to the selection criterion.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - 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. (7 points)**
 - iii. **The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant presented compelling evidence that clearly demonstrates a serious need for professional development in media literacy by highlighting “the surge of digital content”, that has created “unprecedented access to knowledge” but that “has also resulted in a media environment that is too often plagued with misinformation, propaganda, and inaccuracies” (page e35). Equipping teachers with the tools necessary to recognize and combat such instances will ensure that both teachers and students are critical consumers of digital content.

The applicant provided strong details regarding the weaknesses of the current initiatives to fill teacher vacancies with persons who may lack professional competencies and their approach to address the issues is well described. The good use of data clearly underscores the magnitude of the teacher shortage and related challenges in the state (page e35). Expanding recruitment efforts during years 2 and 3 of the proposed project, targeting teachers who work with underserved students (page e11), coupled with the provision of planned professional development, have great potential to fill the recruitment needs for qualified teachers in the neediest schools.

Creation of professional learning via online professional development, the ability to earn micro-credentials as well as stackable credits, will likely support both novice and experienced teachers’ “personal understanding of history, civics, and media literacy”, and will empower them with the necessary skills and knowledge to develop these capacities in their students (page e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the 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. (13 points)**
 - ii. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant presents a clear and detailed timeline for implementation of project activities. Specifically, the applicant's timeline and narrative provide a well-defined view of project tasks and delineates when milestones will be achieved and persons responsible for various tasks (pages e37 – e42).

In addition, the comprehensive staffing plan includes key personnel who are well qualified to do the work and their responsibilities are clearly described. For instance, the applicant asserts that it will employ “experienced researchers and educators with expertise in PD, online learning, evaluation, and civic, history, and media literacy education” (page e42). This will ensure that learning is relevant, timely and responsive to the needs of the target population.

As more evidence of a comprehensive management plan, the PI of the project is well-qualified, experienced and possesses the requisite content skills and grants management knowledge to ensure that the project is carried out as designed and intended impacts are achieved (pages e42 – e49).

Moreover, there is a viable plan in place to provide feedback in order to make continuous improvements to the program. Specifically, via the proposed implementation and impact evaluation, the applicant will utilize feedback loops to provide timely information which will ensure that performance feedback is readily available and disseminated for use by key personnel to make adjustments or improvements to project processes (page e30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)**
 - ii. **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - iii. **The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)**
 - iv. **The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)**

Strengths:

i. The applicant has secured ample support and resources to ensure optimum delivery of the project. For instance, the applicant institution is a well-endowed university and the project will make use of existing college resources to administer the program.

Specifically, regarding the online PD component, the applicant's infrastructure will allow for seamless integration of the project into existing processes (i.e., “notably, program staff have pre-existing access to the suite of online delivery resources (e.g., the Canvas learning management system, Badgr for micro-credentialing, ASU Sync for synchronous online learning, and an online professional learning library”- page e50).

ii. Moreover, the project budget is reasonable and includes costs for project components that are not only necessary but also beneficial (e.g., costs for content experts, page e100 – e101).

Coupled with the timeline which outlines three years of targeted activities that will fully support the project's operation, it is clear that the provision of resources is adequate and will aid in successful project completion.

iii. The applicant also presents well defined plans to incorporate proposed project activities into the existing landscape and normal operational functions of the institutions. For instance, "courses created through the grant will be included in the MLFTC Professional Educator catalog, which is available to education systems and organizations that want to support educator development, specialization, and advancement" (page e51). This type of integration will aid in the sustainability of the project beyond the period of federal assistance and underscores the applicant's planned provision of resources to continue project courses and micro-credentials after the completion of the grant.

iv. In addition, the applicant provides details related to the strong level of commitment from the LEA partner. Specifically, the LEA partner agrees to work collaboratively with the applicant to recruit 10-15 teacher participants per year for three years, who will pursue the proposed ACCLAIM specialization which will ensure teacher recruitment outcomes are met. In addition, the partner LEA will assist in the recruitment of additional teachers to engage in at least one associated micro-credential assessment (page e93).

Moreover, "school partnerships help to facilitate access to district and school-level data required to conduct research and analysis" (page e49). These collaborative efforts are essential to the overall successful implementation of the project and will likely lead to attainment of project objectives and achievement of desired outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include sufficient documentation which clearly details the multi-year financial plan to continue specific components of the proposed project once federal funding ends. Including details related to exactly how successful components of the project would be continued after the grant period (for instance, how the applicant would continue to pay content experts, pages e100 – e101) would support the assertion of sustainability (page e24).

Reader's Score: 25

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

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

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must 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.

Strengths:

The applicant's main method to partially meet this competitive preference priority, is through teacher professional development. For instance, the applicant intends to use tools on how best to prepare and support educators in providing high quality civic learning opportunities for their students in the high –need partner school district. In this way, whenever an opportunity for civic engagement is presented, students will have been taught by well-prepared teachers, which in turn increases the likelihood of successful participation in said opportunities (page 22 – Project ACCLAIM).

Utilizing research that emphasizes the importance of students learning to "think through a public issue using rigorous inquiry skills and methods to weigh different points of view and examine available evidence", further demonstrates that the skills needed for success would be taught.

Moreover, incorporating and aligning the proposed curriculum with the the "C3 Framework" indicates that the applicant recognizes the need for emphasis on inquiry in teaching and the proposed professional learning "will allow teachers to learn about, plan for, and teach skills for civic engagement in a supportive community". Taken together, due to these factors, the applicant is likely to have success in preparing students (pages e23-e24).

Weaknesses:

While providing teachers with tools to teach civic reasoning would aid students in developing skills for civic engagement, the applicant does not sufficiently describe actual hands-on civic engagement activities. In fact, per the logic model, the applicant's mid-term outcome states that it is expected to "increase meaningful, engaging, hands-on instruction in civics, history, and media literacy..." (page e29), but does not address actual civic activities. Providing opportunities for teachers or students to participate in activities like voter registration drives or community clean-ups, are examples of activities that would meet the requirements of this Competitive Preference Priority.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)**

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs(6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) Rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

Through its partnership and planned placement of teachers in the district partner, MUSD, the applicant demonstrates that proposed project activities will meet the equity needs of the high-need students in the district. The applicant will promote educational equity and commit adequate resources to underserved students.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not detail activities related to efforts that would improve engagement of underserved community members (student families) to make decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level. Including activities that would support participation of community members in the civic process, such as a proposed partnership with civic or local community organizations wherein community members could play an active role, would strengthen the applicant's response and would effectively meet all factors of this Competitive Preference Priority.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2023 04:31 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2023 04:36 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AZ Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University (S422B230002)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	18
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	23
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	25
Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	5
Sub Total	7	5
Total	112	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - AHC-NA - 4: 84.422B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: AZ Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University (S422B230002)

Questions

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:
 - (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)
 - (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

The proposed project's conceptual framework is well-conceived and is likely to lead to sound project implementation due to the strong alignment between the proposed project activities and outcomes outlined in the logic model provided. (e. 29).

The detailed proposed specialization course provided in the applicant's proposal will lead to a professional learning model focused on civics, history, and media literacy. (e-17- e19).

Weaknesses:

The applicant noted an expansion of the project in Year 2 and Year 3 however, it did not provide clear details on how it would implement the expansion process. (e11).

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)
 - 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. (7 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant adequately addressed the severity of the problem regarding history, civics, and media literacy that will be addressed by the proposed project ACCLaIM. (e35).

The proposed project has adequately identified gaps in Civics, history, and media literacy. The applicant identified opportunities pertaining to teacher development to address the gaps and weaknesses of the target population. (e36).

The project proposal adequately focused on communities, school districts, teachers and students with the greatest needs. (e22).

The proposed project acknowledges that teachers need a more flexible pathways to gain new knowledge and skills. (e36).

Project ACCLaIM enriches teachers' personal knowledge of media literacy and equips them with the understanding and skills to develop these capacities in their students. (e36).

ACCLaIM seeks to provide subject knowledge proficiency in civics, history, and media literacy for beginning teachers and teachers from grow your own certification programs. (e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the 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. (13 points)**
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

The project's timeline is detailed and provides a clear roadmap for project implementation by aligning key tasks with responsible staff with a provided timeline. (e26-e30).

Project ACCLaIM Evaluation Plan displays content aligned with project objectives, summative evaluation, and formative evaluation. (e31-e34).

The Project ACCLaIM Logic Model that follows (see also Appendix A) displays the inputs and resources, project activities, target outputs, and short-term, mid-term, and long-term outputs that align with the project goal and objectives. (e28-e29).

The key personnel assigned to the proposed project stem from multiple departments within the organization, which suggests an opportunity for the project to have a systemic impact on the organization's overall operation. (e.42-e48).

Weaknesses:

However, there is concern regarding the limited information related to the role of the budget in addressing the proposed project. (e49).

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)
 - ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)
 - iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)

Strengths:

The applicant's organization is well positioned to anchor University facilities (e.g., university library, online document delivery service, audiovisual department, and fully-equipped computers with the necessary hardware, software, and technical support personnel) for use by the research team. (e49).

The applicant's organization demonstrates the capacity to continue the Project ACCLaIM courses and micro-credentials after the completion of the grant. Self-paced versions of the Civics, History, and Media Literacy specialization courses will be free as open educational resources (OERs) to any teacher in Arizona and globally. (e51-e52).

The applicant and the local school district has demonstrated commitment to the proposed project and the implementation and success of the proposed project. (e50).

Weaknesses:

The application provided limited information regarding the extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (e49).

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

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

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must 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.

Strengths:

The proposed project will provide specialized courses and embedded micro-credentials focused on civics and American history. (e22).

Project ACCLaIM focuses on underserved populations and includes partnership with Mesa Unified School District (MUSD), the largest school district in Arizona. (e22).

Project ACCLaIM's innovative approach to professional learning will allow teachers to learn about, plan for, and teach skills for civic engagement in a supportive community. (e24).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)**

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs (6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) Rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The organization has partnered with the largest district in the state that serves a diverse population of students. (e24).

The applicants will recruit teachers from rural communities, to participate in the project, in hopes to provide equitable access to quality PD opportunities, which are often limited in rural areas due to their geographical location. (e25).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not demonstrate how it would provide under-served students access to opportunities for leadership.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 01:58 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AZ Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University (S422B230002)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	18
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	25
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	25
Sub Total	100	93
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	5
Sub Total	7	5
Total	112	103

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - AHC-NA - 4: 84.422B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: AZ Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University (S422B230002)

Questions

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:

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

(i) The applicant thoroughly provides a rationale for the proposed project. For example, scores recently released from the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show the first-ever decline in the Civics assessment score (The Nation's Report Card, 2023a) and a continuing decline since 2014 in the U.S. history score (The Nation's Report Card, 2023b). In addition, according to a recent RAND Corporation report, over the past few decades, school systems have increasingly "sidelined students' civic development" and show a lack of robust elementary social studies instruction nationwide" (Diliberti et al., 2023). These reports have brought renewed attention to the teaching of social studies subjects that have been subject to marginalization for many years (Diliberti et al., 2023) and battlegrounds for political fights over what curriculum should be taught and how (Álvarez, 2021; Collins, 2022). (e14-e15)

(ii) The proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. The applicant noted that increasingly, competency-based strategies for teacher professional learning are gaining interest due to their focus on teachers' providing evidence of learning through personalized learning (Zhang & West, 2020). The use of microcredentials breaks out of the traditional modes of PD, such as the one-shot "sit and get" sessions, often completed during designated PD days, which may or may not be relevant to classroom teachers' needs. Shorter professional learning opportunities also offer a more targeted approach than traditional degree programs that can be long, costly, and more theory-laden, possibly hampering teachers in gaining the instructional skills they need. Microcredentials can provide the right balance of duration with shorter, targeted topics that are job-embedded and provide targeted professional learning. They offer flexible pathways to degree completion through the ability to "stack" multiple credentials (Carey & Stefaniak, 2018.) In addition, teachers have a positive view of earning badges as PD and frequently share that they have earned them via digital media (Jones et al., 2018). (e17-e18)

Weaknesses:

(i) None noted.

(ii) The applicant did not justify how they would expand nationwide. It is not clear how they will perform this task in all the different locations. (e17-e18)

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

- i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)**
- 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. (7 points)**
- iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

Strengths:

- i. The applicant clearly describes the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. The applicant noted that as of 2021, in Arizona, as in many other parts of the United States, a significant proportion of students are considered underserved. Many students live in rural or low-income areas, where resources may be scarce and access to high-quality education may be limited. Additionally, Arizona has a diverse student population, with a significant number of students belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups, including a large number of Native American and Hispanic students. Specifically, during the 2021-22 school year, 624,442 secondary students (grades 6-12) attended publicly funded K-12 schools in Arizona (Arizona Department of Education, 2021-22). Of those, approximately 47% are Hispanic, 5.6% African American, 4.5% Native American, and 3% Asian. Approximately 1,279 schools qualified under Title 1 guidelines (Arizona Title 1 School Eligibility List, 2019), and 16.7% of children ages 5-17 lived in poverty (Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2021). These students often face additional educational challenges from socio-economic disadvantages, language barriers, and systemic inequities. (e25)
- ii. The applicant clearly provides 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. The applicant propose focusing on underserved populations to include partnership with Mesa Unified School District (MUSD), the largest school district in Arizona. MUSC served 64,714 students in 2022-23, including a majority of underserved students. During the 2022-2023 school year, 46.4% of students in MUSD identified as "Hispanic," 38.1% as "White," 5.3% as "Black/African American," 4.5% as "American Indian/Al. Nat," 3.9% as "mixed," 1.1% as "Asian," and 0.8% as "Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander." In that same year, 24.4% of MUSD students indicated that English was not their primary spoken language, and 59.8% of elementary students, 58.7% of junior high school students, and 50.3% of high school students qualified for free or reduced lunch (Mesa Public Schools, 2023). Additional schools and districts will be invited to participate during the grant with attention focused on recruiting high-needs school districts. (e25-e26)
- iii. The applicant clearly describes the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. The project will include 175 teachers who complete the specialization and teach at least 21,875 students. Additionally, up to 300 additional teachers (100 per year) will complete at least on microcredential, with potential reach to another 10,500 students. Year 1 will concentrate on teachers from Mesa Unified School District, which is the largest district in the state with over 64,000 students and 79 schools; the majority of students in the district are considered underserved. Year 2 will expand statewide in Arizona, targeting teachers from rural parts of the state and schools with large populations of underserved students. Year 3 will expand nationwide, again targeting teachers who work with underserved students. (e11, e35-36)

Weaknesses:

- i. None noted.
- ii. None noted.
- iii. None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the 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. (13 points)
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)

Strengths:

i. The applicant describes a comprehensive 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. For example, Principle Investigator (.24 FTE) is an Associate Professor of History Education at ASU with appointments in MLFTC and the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies (SHPRS). Qualifications includes a PhD from the University of Michigan in Educational Studies, with a specialization in History/Social Science Education, a MEd in Secondary Social Studies Education from George Mason University, and a BA in History from Colorado College. She received a Teaching Certificate (Interstate License) in History/Social Science, grades 7-12 and was a high school social studies teacher in Arlington, VA from 1998-2003. (e43)

Project ACCLaIM will include experienced researchers and educators with expertise in PD, online learning, evaluation, and civic, history, and media literacy education. In hiring project staff and while recruiting participants, the project team will not discriminate underrepresented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, and disability, will employ ethical hiring and business practices, and adhere to ASU's regulations and policies, which comply with state and federal guidelines (see ED General Education Provisions Act [GEPA] 427 Form [V2.0]). (e42)

Timeline for the project proposes in Year 1, the Project ACCLaIM team will focus on developing specialization courses and microcredentials and recruiting and enrolling the first cohort of 25 participants in those courses. Participants in the first cohort will take courses in the spring, summer, and fall semesters in 2024. They will also join the Professional Learning Network (PLN) in Spring 2024, where they will engage in peer-to-peer discussions and events and receive mentoring from the project team. The project team will recruit and enroll 50 participants for the specialization courses in Year 2. (e37-e42)

ii. The applicant clearly provides adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. The applicant noted that throughout the grant, feedback loops based on findings will be provided to Project ACCLaIM grant staff regularly to mitigate any challenges that may occur and ensure continuous program improvement. For all participants who leave the program, a brief exit survey will be provided to determine reasons for attrition and to plan for ways to decrease attrition in the program as a whole. To supplement the quantitative data being collected, two focus group interviews will be conducted once per year to examine the process in which teachers implemented information into their class lesson plan, barriers and successes, and provide feedback to the grant team on what they have gained through participation in the courses and the PLN. (e20, e19)

Weaknesses:

- i. None noted.
- ii. None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)**
- ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)**
- iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)**
- iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)**

Strengths:

i. The applicant clearly provides adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. ASU is an R1 doctoral research-intensive institution with substantial resources available to support the research enterprise. ASU provides a comfortable working environment for project personnel and basic office needs, as well as space and equipment for storing related project materials. Existing physical resources include meeting spaces, faculty laboratories, and equipment, all of which are adequate to meet various research needs. University facilities (e.g., university library, online document delivery service, audiovisual department, and fully-equipped computers with the necessary hardware, software, and technical support personnel) are available for use as needed by the research team. ASU has the resources and capacity to implement and administer the proposed program. ASU managed more than \$900 million in sponsored project expenditures in 2021. (e49-e50)

ii. The applicant provides an itemized budget with costs that are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. For example, salaries, equipment, travel, and contractual costs are reasonable for the scope of the project. (e49)

iii. The applicant clearly demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. Project ACCLaIM will utilize university and college resources to administer the program to create specialization courses and microcredentials in civics, history, and media literacy. Notably, program staff have pre-existing access to the suite of online delivery resources (e.g., the Canvas learning management system, Badgr for microcredentialing, ASU Sync for synchronous online learning, and an online professional learning library). MLFTC employs dozens of instructional designers who can quickly take PD designs and make them available in high-quality, research-based online formats. MLFTC also has deep capacity that allows for tech-enabled PD and research. We have access to fully-equipped computers with the necessary hardware, software, and technical support personnel, secure servers with 24x7 monitoring, daily backups, monthly patching, and cybersecurity through ASU's firewall. Instructional design teams from the OoDL collaborate with colleagues, faculty members, and staff to design quality professional learning experiences for participating teachers. Collaboration efforts include designing and developing high-quality, engaging learning experiences ranging from 15 minutes to full degree programs. Project ACCLaIM will use resources from the OoDL throughout the project. (e49-e52)

iv. The applicant fully documents relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. The college leverages its relationships with local and national organizations to make a difference through excellence in partnerships, programs, and preparation. School partnerships help to facilitate access to district and school-level data required to conduct research and analysis. For example, the college has well-established partnerships with more than 300 school districts across Arizona and the nation. (Appendix E)

Weaknesses:

i. None noted.

ii. The applicant did not provide ample information in the budget narrative cost does not delineate how it aligns with the objectives design. The applicant did not include a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; and no evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (e109)

iii. None noted.

iv. None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must 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.

Strengths:

The applicant stated that four of the specialization courses and embedded microcredentials will focus on civics and two will focus on American history (see Table 1). For the civics courses, the project team is following the recommendations of the National Academy of Education report on "Educating for Civic Reasoning & Discourse" (Lee et al., 2021) and the "Mapping Civic Measurement" report from the Institutes of Scholars & Citizens (2023) to focus professional learning on teaching and learning civic reasoning & readiness, civic discourse, and civic engagement. Civic reasoning is important for students to "think through a public issue using rigorous inquiry skills and methods to weigh different points of view and examine available evidence" (Lee et al., 2021, p. 1). Civic dimensions: what individuals understand, what or how they participate, how they connect with organizations and others, and what they believe that influences their engagement" (Institute for Scholars & Citizens, 2023, p. 13). Civic discourse "concerns how to communicate with one another around the challenges of public issues in order to enhance both individual and group understanding" (Lee et al., 2021, p. 1). During project design, the team will follow recommendations in the reports on how best to prepare and support educators in providing high quality civic learning opportunities for their students (Conklin et al., 2021). (e22-e24)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs (6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) Rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant estimate that Project ACCLaIM will impact at least 21,875 students through the professional learning of their teachers. This number includes a total of 175 teachers (25 teachers in Year 1; 50 teachers in Year 2; and 100 teachers in Year 3) teaching five classes of at least 25 students. In Year 1, a majority of the students will come from underserved populations, as the project's district partner, MUSD, serves over 64,000 students in 79 schools, of whom 59.8% are economically disadvantaged, and 61.9% identify as a minority (Mesa Public Schools, 2023). The district, located in Mesa, Arizona, is the largest in the state and serves a diverse population of students. The district's mission is to provide a rich, diverse, and rigorous educational experience to its students, with a focus on high academic standards and a comprehensive curriculum. (e25)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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