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

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Center for the Future of Arizona (S422B230016)
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	30
	Sub Total	100	100
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	110

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Center for the Future of Arizona (S422B230016)

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:

   Operating from the premise that more civically active, informed, and engaged communities are needed, the applicant has designed a contemporary project that has great potential to effect change on the target population. The proposed project is based on evidence and best-practices and thus demonstrates the clear rationale for how and why change is expected to occur (i.e., how impacts will be achieved, page e18).

   The applicant's inclusion of the pedagogically inclusive and evidence – based strategy, School Participatory Budgeting is innovative in that it goes beyond the traditional "sit and get" ideology for professional development, but instead engages and equips educators with the tools necessary to support students in hands-on, high-impact civic education, which has a great likelihood of addressing identified needs (pages e18 – e22).

   The applicant outlines goals and objectives that provide clear content for the process and outcome components of the logic model and theory of change, further demonstrating the rationale for the project. (page e20).

   In addition, the goal of expanding access to high quality civic education for both students and educators is aligned with project objectives and corresponding activities.

   Providing opportunities for experiential learning is also a strength with regard to the project's design because this enables students to learn by doing and is an evidenced based practice that can lead to improved student outcomes. For instance, the activity wherein students make decisions with actual public dollars that result in tangible projects on their school campus is an innovative method to meet hands-on civic engagement milestones (page e31).

   Moreover, objectives and activities are also tied to the evaluation of the project in that the assessment of project outcomes and processes will drive evaluation design and implementation (pages e37-e38). This level of cohesiveness is indicative of a well-designed and well- thought out plan of action to meet the needs of the target population.

   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 clearly identifies the needs of the target population and provides supporting details and data to add context and highlight the severity of issues within the target area (pages e24-e34).

   Specifically, significant gaps persist in access to innovative and cutting – edge strategies for educators and especially for underserved student populations. Providing the evidence based intervention – School Participatory Budgeting is responsive to those needs, particularly because of the activities such as experiential learning opportunities which can have positive impacts (improvement in academic performance and in civic engagement, page e19; page e31).

   The proposed project aims to address the urgent need for evidence-based interventions that foster meaningful civic learning opportunities for educators and underrepresented K-12 students by creating avenues for access to high-quality professional development and resources. Doing so has the potential to provide long term improvement in engagement and academic outcomes (page e16).
   As teachers are one of the most important factors in student outcomes, training teachers to create more civically responsive classrooms, will ensure students in under-resourced schools have access to high-impact K-12 civic education. This will meet the needs and fill in the gaps caused by unequal opportunities in under-resourced rural and low income areas (pages e29 – e30).

   Moreover, because low-income, rural students, minority populations and students with disabilities lag far behind their white, more affluent counterparts with regard to civic engagement opportunities, the proposed collaboration between students and school community stakeholders to work together on the design of the School Participatory Budget, will help to close that gap. Students in the target population will be given a chance to put classroom concepts into action and fully engage with their community, thereby closing the opportunity gap (page e28).

   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 boasts an evidenced – based record of success therefore it is likely, due to the alignment of the applicant's expertise with the needs of the target area, the project will be managed effectively and that significant outcomes can be achieved (page e20 – e37).

The applicant's management plan (pages e38-e41) includes the collaborative efforts of various project partners (page e36). This collaboration among participating entities (ASU for evaluation, etc. e41-e42) is critical to the success of the project and will lead to successful expansion of and access to professional development.

Key personnel have the requisite knowledge and expertise to manage the project efficiently which will ensure that objectives are met and intended outcomes are achieved. For instance, the Project Director has previously served in leadership roles spanning organizations focused on education, service, and civic engagement including the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), Georgetown University Center for Social Justice, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston. These are experiences that are relevant to the goals and objectives of the proposed project (pages e47 –e48). Moreover, the applicant has ensured that key personnel roles are clearly identified and it is readily understood that each is critical to the success of the project (pages e47 – e48).

The applicant's timeline provides a view of project tasks and delineates when milestones will be achieved and persons responsible for various tasks. To demonstrate and underscore the commitment of partners, detailed MOAs/Letters of agreement are included in appendices.

The applicant has appropriate feedback mechanisms, via the planned evaluation of project components (pages e38-e42) and said feedback will be aptly used to make programmatic adjustments and improvements. Embedding continuous improvement in every aspect of project implementation (both summative and formative processes) will ensure that all services are provided as envisioned, will lead to achievement of intended impacts and, should feedback indicate that processes necessitate change, will serve as the primary indicator of needed modifications.

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 proposes to commit ample and appropriate support to the project via its more than adequate resources (i.e., resources such as facilities, equipment, and supplies) and will collaborate with partners to ensure successful project implementation (page e46).

The applicant organization is well established in the State and has extensive experience in spearheading, overseeing and supporting many notable initiatives in both education and civic engagement (e.g., developing public-private funding models to help expand and scale major educational initiatives), which underscores the applicant's ability to secure necessary resources (pages e46 – e47).

ii.   In addition, the personnel from the applicant organization will be instrumental in administering the project and providing professional development (page e47) and costs are reasonable to support the staff.

Moreover, funds will be expended for travel to schools throughout the state for training, professional development and technical assistance which is a necessary and reasonable expense that is tied directly to the activities included within the logic model.

iii.   To ensure sustainability of the project, the applicant will rely on successful collaborations in that school partners invest a portion of their budgets toward the SPB processes (pages e48 – e49).

Moreover, due the applicant's success in securing external funds coupled with the State Educational Department's (SEA) funding support for the SBP initiative, it can be readily envisioned that there will be ample resources to maintain the project beyond the period of federal assistance.

iv.   The applicant has documentation of partner's specific commitments and each offers support which will aid in successful project implementation (pages e96 – e102).

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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 will build upon their existing evidence-based strategy that has great potential to encourage educators to provide innovative civics and government learning strategies (pages e19 –e23).

   With the planned professional development activities (i.e., the SPB Institute; developing teachers to integrate hands-on civic learning by connecting the intervention – SPB – with content; technical assistance for schools and leaders, etc.) the proposed project has a great likelihood of meeting the needs of the target population (pages e19- e23).

In addition, the focus on enabling teachers to be skilled providers of hands-on activities, will likely increase teacher competence and subsequently student engagement thus, ultimately achieving the intended outcomes of the project (page e20).

Moreover, providing students with the opportunity to engage in projects whereby they have a hands-on participatory role in school processes (e.g., students are able to propose ideas for school improvement, assist with developing project proposals, campaign for their preferred project(s), and ultimately vote for a winning project to improve their campus, page e23), is evidenced based and an important approach to addressing this priority. Taken together, the approach has a great likelihood of success.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

   a, b, c. The proposed project's focus is centered on improving civic learning and engagement of underserved communities and underrepresented populations (i.e., ELLs, children with disabilities who are often left out of civic processes at school, page e23).

   c, d. Students in underserved communities will be provided with the opportunity to propose and work on a school improvement project (pages e27 –e29). Students will have critical input in and will be able to actively participate in planning and presenting a civic project thereby elevating their voices with regard to civic matters. This represents an important opportunity to actively engage in the civic process by allowing students to make decisions that will influence

policy and practice, thereby effectively addressing this priority.

d. Activities such as the Vote Day, represents an exceptional method to allow collaboration with local elections officials and community organizations as students get hands-on experience knowledge related to how local elections are ran (page e28).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant intends to involve the entire school community (students, teachers, and leadership) in the project, there were few details related to how student's families and other members of the under-resourced communities might be engaged in civic processes. Providing more specifics regarding student families would more fully address sub-factor d of the Competitive Preference Priority.

Reader's Score: 5

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Center for the Future of Arizona (S422B230016)
Reader #2:   **********

		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	30
	Sub Total	100	100
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	7
	Sub Total	7	7
	Total	112	112

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Center for the Future of Arizona (S422B230016)

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 proposal effectively addresses gaps through the enhancement and scale of pedagogically inclusive, evidence-based strategies that engages educators to support students in hands-on, high impact civic learning. (e19).

   SPB will integrate hands-on civic learning with content in American History, civics, and government by connecting classroom curriculum and resources. (e20).

   The project will provide curriculum support and resources to teach the Constitution, Bill of Rights, democratic principles, government institutions, and the electoral process. (e22).

   The project proposal addresses that access to high-quality, experiential and innovative civic education increases the likelihood of participation in community, political, and electoral engagement in the long term. (e18).

   The entity establishes there is a strong need for effective civic learning interventions that foster meaningful, participatory opportunities for K-12 students in order to address the long-term health of the state of democracy. (e18).

   A logic model was provided and their theory of change to support the project proposal. (e20).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were 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 project seeks to bridge the gaps of only learning about the past and present of democracy and systematically connect classroom content in American History, civics, and government with hands-on civics learning. (e27-e28).

The proposal seeks to address deficits in educators' access to civic learning strategies by providing training, professional development, and technical assistance to address educators' gaps in civic content. (e29-e30).

The applicant will establish partnerships with 100 school communities to engage underrepresented student populations with high impact civic learning. (e32).

Civics and social studies education are marginalized subject areas that often emphasize rote memorization, standardized assessment outcomes, and are deeply under resourced. (e25).

There is a history of disparity in access to quality, high-impact civic learning and educator professional development. (e25).

Compared to STEM funding – financial and resource dollars for civic learning and educator development is severely lacking for civics education. Additionally, investments are even less and deeply lagging in rural schools and among historically underserved and minoritized youth populations. (e25).

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:

In addition to an evidence-based track record of success, the applicant submitted a detailed table outlining its management plan, timeline, and list of responsible parties. (e38-e41).

CFA will partner with ASU PGI to administer evaluative instruments to measure and guide continuous program improvement to ensure partners' needs and performance measures are met. (e41-e42).

Data collection measures will include pre and post student surveys, student pre-and-post-test on American History, Civics, and Government, student and educator focus groups, and educator surveys. (e.43–e44).

The applicant has robust partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations to provide additional resources and

materials to link the process to academic learning standards and curricular support for teachers. (e35).

The applicant provided a model/illustration of how partners will come together to ensure high-impact SPB process in Title 1 Elementary School Districts located in under-served, urban areas in Arizona. (e37).

School partners in the project will design and recruit a student steering committee to participate in the execution of the grant. (e37).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

   CFA is deeply capable of providing the resources including facilities, equipment, and supplies to ensure successful implementation of the project proposal (e46).

   The project proposal includes key personnel who will serve on the Project Team to provide strategic direction, alignment, and partnership outreach to ensure the project success. (e47-e48).

   CFA has demonstrated the ability to operate the project beyond the grant by incorporating a portion of the school partners budgets toward the SPB process and has provided evidence of support from stakeholders. (e49 and Appendix E).

   The staff referenced in the project brings complementary expertise in education innovation, community and economic development, participatory democracy and civic engagement. (e48).

   School district partners have invested nearly one million dollars in funding the student-led improvement projects. Their investment will yield a significant return regarding community and student impact. (e49).

   The entity included letters of support from current participating LEAs that demonstrates their full commitment to project/partnership. (e51).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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 adequately addresses Competitive Preference Priority 1 by training and coaching educators to deliver high-impact civic learning with a focus on reaching under-served school communities. (e22).

   The CFA provides curriculum support and resources to teach the US Constitution, Bill of Rights, and new curriculum resources in K-5 that connect SPB with social studies standards. (e22).

   CFA will provide coaching and technical assistance with over 100 school communities to implement SPB with a focus on underrepresented student populations and engaging them in innovative civic activities. (e22-e23).

   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 applicant adequately addresses Competitive Preference Priority 1 by training and coaching educators to deliver high-impact civic learning with a focus on reaching underserved school communities. (e22).

The CFA provides curriculum support and resources to teach the US Constitution, Bill of Rights, and new curriculum resources in K-5 that connect SPB with social studies standards. (e22).

CFA will provide coaching and technical assistance with over 100 school communities to implement SPB with a focus on underrepresented student populations and engaging them in innovative civic activities. (e22-e23).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 7

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Center for the Future of Arizona (S422B230016)
Reader #3:   **********

	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	30
Sub Total	100	100
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	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	112

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Center for the Future of Arizona (S422B230016)

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 proposed project clearly demonstrates a rationale. The applicant noted given today's context of democratic backsliding, increasing political polarization, and social and educational inequities, they need active, informed, and engaged communities more than ever. More connected communities are more economically resilient, individuals who participate in civic life exhibit greater well-being and access to opportunity, and policies are more responsive when those affected by them have a voice (National Conference on Citizenship, 2013). The applicant stated that there is a significant civic opportunity gap nationally and in Arizona along lines of age, geography, ethnicity, ability, income, and education levels (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2010; Lo, 2019; Terzi, 2007). Research also shows that access to high-quality, experiential and innovative civic education increases the likelihood of participation in community, political, and electoral engagement in the long-term. Moreover, values and attitudes of youth toward democracy will influence the quality of democracy in the future, and knowledge of and trust in democratic institutions among youth is presently lower than among older generations (Foa & Mounk, 2016; Haggard & Kaufman, 2021). (e18)

   ii. The proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. The applicant proposes answering the call for best available practices in teaching and research in civic learning through the School Participatory Budgeting: Innovation in Civic Learning project. This critical investment will catalyze the growth of SPB through strategies that are directly responsive to the priorities. An investment in this project will allow CFA and higher education, nonprofit, and school partners to build upon this strong foundation and rapidly expand SPB's reach throughout the state. This critical investment will position SPB as a sustainable model for teaching civics that can be replicated in other states through the development of tools, resources, and materials to be shared widely for quick replication in school communities across the country. Through these objectives, this project will contribute to student and educator civic skill-building and learning outcomes in the short term with greater likelihood of being active civic participants long term, as well as systemic integration of high-quality civic education, more connected school communities, more equitable access to civic opportunity, and ultimately, greater health and resiliency of the democracy for the long term. (e20-e21)

   Weaknesses:

   i. None noted.

   ii. None noted.

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 noted gaps along the lines of education, age, ethnicity, and money, Arizona has consistently fallen behind the nation in many crucial indicators of civic engagement. For example, according to data from the US Census Current Population Survey, voter participation differences between Arizonans with less than a high school diploma and those with a college degree or greater can reach 20 percentage points. In contrast to the 14% of Arizonans with a college degree or more, only 2.5% of those with less than a high school diploma contacted a public figure in 2019 (CFA, 2020). Significant issues in the civic life were recently identified by the 2020 Gallup Arizona Survey, which also found that Arizonans have little faith in their elected officials to be responsive, data-driven, and forward-thinking. Only 26% of Arizonans see officials working across party lines, and only 33% of people in the state believe our leaders represent varied viewpoints (CFA, 2021). Additionally, 14.5% of Arizona's non-voters claimed that they abstained from the 2020 election because they believed their vote would be inconsequential (CFA, 2020). (e24)

   ii. The applicant noted some specific gaps in services and infrastructure. For example, financial investment and resource allocation for civic learning and professional development is greatly eclipsed by other subject areas. The national per-student average of spending for STEM subjects is roughly $55, whereas funding for civics is just five cents (Adams, 2019). Investments are much less prevalent in remote schools and among youth populations that have been historically neglected and marginalized (Jamieson, 2013; Winthrop, 2020). Due to the continued marginalization of social studies as well as the lack of chances for professional development in social studies for educators and school administrators at the elementary school level, these gaps are significantly more widespread in elementary schools (Diliberti et al., 2023; Will 2023). (e25-e26)

   iii. The applicant provides a description of the target group's immediate needs. Arizona is the perfect place to carry out this initiative because the future of the United States is reflected in the state's student population. According to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), 2022a, Hispanic/Latino students make up the single largest group in the state, accounting for 47.02% of K–12 pupils. Numerous students who are economically disadvantaged attend schools in Arizona: 13% of students in the state get special education services, while 51.2% of students in the state are eligible for free or reduced lunches (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; ADE, 2022b). CFA has given priority to partnering with schools that primarily serve students from low-income families and pupils of color in its efforts to demonstrate SPB. The applicant regularly collaborates with these partners to establish a process that is representative of and responsive to the school community, which is important given that 69% of the school partners that are presently implementing SPB are Title I schools with large minority student populations. (e32-e33)

   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 is in a unique position to lead this effort and provide strategic direction, oversight, and project management because of its proven track record of advancing innovation to implementation and policy to practice. To promote innovation and development throughout the educational landscape, CFA has spent the past 20 years working in partnership with numerous partners at the local, state, and federal levels, including non-profit, K–12, higher education, community-based groups, government, charity, and companies. In the fields of civic engagement, college and career routes, and workforce development, CFA offers extensive knowledge, credibility, and connections. In this project, CFA will take the lead on partnership development, management, and outreach; create and oversee training through SPB Institute; offer technical assistance, ongoing mentoring, and implementation resources to school partners; and take the lead on communications and tool development to ensure statewide scale with applicability for new communities. (e35-e37) The applicant offers a thorough schedule that demonstrates their ability to complete the project on schedule and under budget. (e38-e41)

   ii. The applicant describes in detail the steps that will be taken to ensure feedback and ongoing project improvement. The applicant will gather input for ongoing improvement, help with partnership outreach and development, support the development of curriculum and tools, and offer ongoing mentoring as well as national and international resources for implementation. Procedures to guarantee feedback and ongoing improvement. (e36) To assess the effects of SPB processes, CFA will collaborate with ASU PGI to implement several evaluative tools for ongoing program improvement, attending to the needs of school partners, and expanding knowledge of SPB's long-term effects. Focus group questions are derived from survey data relevant to each school location, specifically what survey respondents report regarding satisfaction levels, process and implementation feedback, and impact modifications. Focus groups are co-facilitated by the ASU PGI and CFA teams, with team members switching off between facilitating and taking notes on participant discussion and input. (e41-e44)

   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 provides adequate assistance from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization, including facilities, tools, materials, and other resources. To ensure the success of this project, CFA is fully dedicated to and capable of supplying the necessary facilities, tools, and supplies. Furthermore, CFA has a strong alignment with its objective and the organizational history necessary to complete this project successfully. The Arizona We Want is a shared vision of prosperity centered on what Arizonans value most, and CFA is dedicated to attaining it. In addition to sharing reliable data regarding Arizona's performance in these priority areas, bringing important issues to the public's attention, and collaborating with communities and leaders to find solutions to societal issues, CFA listens to Arizonans to hear what matters to them most. CFA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit "do-tank," not just a think-tank, with the goal of supporting Arizona's future success. Since its establishment, CFA has pushed significant programs in civic participation, employment development, and education that have impacted the lives of tens of thousands of Arizonans and laid the groundwork for prosperity, a high standard of living, and opportunity for all Arizonans. (e46)

   ii. The applicant provides reasonable expenses considering the importance of the project under consideration. From this investment, CFA is looking for resources to enhance the above-described task scope. The Civic Health Director, Civic Health Project Manager, Civic Health Program Coordinator Sr., and crucial individuals in marketing, communications, and operations are part of the core project team that will be supported by resources. These employees will operate as the project's leaders for the following activities: creating a strategy and partnerships, managing the program, communications, and outreach, training and facilitating school partners, creating tools and resources, and working with ASU PGI on evaluation. Travel to school sites across the state for training, professional development, and technical assistance as well as travel to conferences and meetings at the state and federal levels and grantee meetings will be supported by additional budgetary resources. To support materials and supplies including training materials, voting dividers and stickers for school vote days, printing of handbooks, and similar programming supplies, the application is requesting funding. Additionally, funds are allocated in the proposed budget for the creation of resource toolkits, videos, and an online resource portal for scaling and reproducing SPB across the country. (e48-e49)

   iii. The applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. Project funding and stakeholder support are noted. School partners must allocate budget, staff time, and implementation costs to SPB processes to sustain the model. Each district partner that has piloted SPB has expanded district-wide within 3–4 years, confirming the model's long-term viability and commitment. The applicant will reach more school communities and partners with minimal resources. CFA's SPB work has been successful in garnering funding, including a large award from the Arizona Department of Education ESSER to support program implementation and assessment. The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Affirm Cares Employee Foundation, Albertson's Companies Foundation, Applied Materials Foundation, Burton Family Foundation, OneAZ, Phoenix IDA, Salt River Project, Steele Foundation, and Wells Fargo have also supported SPB. CFA actively pursues more support from individual contributors, business, foundation, and government partners. Importantly, CFA has created a 5-year strategic plan and business model to assist SPB expansion and sustainability. This involves awareness, partnership development, large-scale program delivery approaches, diversified revenue streams, and a fee-for-service technical help model. (e49-e50)

iv. The applicant clearly demonstrates the relevance and commitment of each proposed project partner to the project's implementation and success. Each partner in the proposed project was clearly committed by the applicant. The fact that the school communities that have tested and embraced the procedure exhibit exceptional dedication to continued sustainability and engagement in the model is one of the most compelling types of evidence of SPB's effectiveness. To keep students engaged despite the disruptions to their education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, CFA collaborated extensively with school partners to adapt the model to virtual and hybrid modalities. During this period, SPB assumed a greater significance as a tactic to support learning, engage kids, and foster a more secure, connected school environment. The CFA has a sizable pipeline of potential partners across the state who have a keen interest in implementing the model, in addition to the 60 K–12 school communities already participating in SPB. These districts, which represent various regions of the state, contain both sizable metropolitan and tiny rural ones. With this investment, the applicant will be able to work with these potential partners more rapidly and support them as they implement over the next three years. The letters of support from the present participating LEAs are part of the papers they have provided and completely reflect their dedication to working with CFA on this initiative. (e51-e51)

Weaknesses:

i. None noted.

ii. None noted.

iii. None noted.

iv. None noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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:

   Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (Competitive Preference Priority 1): This project directly complies with the criteria in "Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement" by offering a "evidence-based strategy 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." Through this investment, CFA will offer coaching and technical support to 100 school communities annually for three years as they implement SPB, with a focus on underrepresented student populations, with the goal of eventually involving 200,000 students statewide in creative civic engagement activities. The strategy enables each school community to sustain the model independently of CFA support

within two to three years following the adoption and integration of SPB in the classroom, enabling ongoing scaling and extension to new communities. (e22-e23)

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:

   Competitive Preference Priority 2) School Participatory Budgeting: Innovation in Civic Learning is aligned with Competitive Preference Priority 2 as it is created to advance the stated criteria to "promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students," which is stated as "promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities." By elevating their voices, through participation and perspectives, and by giving them access to opportunities, SPB is primarily intended to achieve Competitive Preference 2's goal of "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 emphasizing their voice and experience and assisting them in developing important civic skills, SPB students are given actual responsibility to make decisions on behalf of their school community. All kids, especially those from historically disadvantaged groups like English language learners and children with disabilities, obtain vital skills for civic readiness thanks to inclusive practices. (e22-e23)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **7**

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