

**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: Loyola University of Chicago (S422B230041)

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 | 27 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 97 |
| 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 | 109 |

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Loyola University of Chicago (S422B230041)

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 is evidence based and clearly conceptualized around the principles of asset-based community development (ABCD). A strengths-based approach such as in this application, is an exceptional method to address needs because of the focus on the varied experiences, skills, talents, and insights that students, teachers and administrators will bring to the educational environment. Viewing such differences as assets and not deficits has the potential to ensure equity for diverse student and teacher participants thus achieving the goals of providing appropriate teaching and learning supports as well as providing students with multiple civic learning opportunities for critical civic engagement. (pages e23 – e32).

The rationale for the development of the proposed project is highlighted via the applicant's thorough description of the premise for including specific project components (needs of the target population). Notably, the delineation of supports that are specific to each group of participants (i.e., principal, teacher, student and community engagement and supports, pages e25 –e37), is indicative of emphasis on providing targeted interventions based on needs.

The information contained within the applicant's logic model (Attachment 1 – no page number) is quite detailed and thoroughly depicts the vision for meeting the needs of the target population and the mechanism by which change/improvement is expected to occur. This is indicative of a well –conceptualized plan that has the potential for success due to the reliance on lessons learned from previous projects and best practices.

Moreover, the applicant's focus on the unique make –up of specific communities demonstrates clearly that the needs of the target population were considered during planning and will continuously be at the forefront of the intervention, thus increasing the likelihood for success in meeting said needs (pages e19-e23).

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 detailed several specific unaddressed needs. Specifically, the applicant presented compelling evidence that clearly demonstrated the low socio-economic status of families in the target area (pages e22- e23), justifying the applicant's proposed project.

For instance, in one of the schools with whom the project will work, more than 90% of the students are from low income families and of that group, nearly 44% are English Language Learners (page e22). These numbers are indicative of great need and supports their inclusion in the project.

In addition, supporting the assertion of need, the applicant highlighted data indicating the sharp decline in knowledge and understanding of democracy, the lack of civics instruction in US schools and the lack of equitable access to civic learning opportunities (e25-e26) thus thoroughly establishing the dire need for strategic and targeted intervention that will support both students and teachers.

Moreover, the applicant's focus on the ways to effect change with thought given to the unique make-up and high needs/low income status of specific communities demonstrates clearly that the greatest needs of the target population were considered during planning and will continuously be at the forefront of the intervention, thus increasing the likelihood for success in meeting said needs (e19 –e23).

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:

Key personnel for the project (e.g., Project Director, community coordinator, etc.) will have the expertise and knowledge to ensure that processes are carried out with fidelity, on-time and within budget (pages e42 – e46).

For instance, the Community Coordinator position is an important addition to the management team as community involvement, engagement and service learning are all critical activities of the project. Moreover, this position will have

responsibility to network with and gather together community organizations and other partners to identify issues and strategies that students can be engaged in – the main premise of the proposed project (page e45).

The applicant intends to employ both full-time and part-time personnel to oversee and ensure the efficient management, fiscal affairs and overall successful governance of the project (page e45-e46). The inclusion of a part-time Special Projects coordinator who will work closely with the Project Director to implement the experiential learning experiences, Model UN Conference and Vote 2024, is a vital role to ensure that all aspects of the civic engagement are managed efficiently.

The plan to include the PI who has experience in developing, guiding, implementing, and evaluating civic education initiatives and in grants management (Resume attachment), will serve the project well and will increase the likelihood of effective management and achievement of intended outcomes.

The applicant's timeline (attachment) provides a view of project tasks and delineates when milestones will be achieved (pages e48-e53). Careful attention was paid to ensuring that appropriate partner relationships were built during the first year of implementation. This will serve as a strong foundation for successful implementation of project processes in subsequent years.

An important component of the management plan is the inclusion of an advisory council charged with convening monthly meetings with stakeholders (e.g., community and school leaders, students, university faculty and staff, etc.) to guide and implement the project. The Advisory Council will be instrumental in assessing and using feedback from evaluations to improve project processes and enhance outcomes (page e45).

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:

The Practicing Democracy in Communities project builds on the capacities and resources of the applicant IHE, the collaborating community and public schools, and community organizations.

The applicant is well endowed with many institutional resources. In addition to human resources, the applicant has strategic financial systems in place to manage a project of this magnitude (page e60).

The applicant demonstrates a long and successful history of collaboration with communities and asserts that it will

continue to develop relationships, partnerships, and resources to implement PDC successfully. As such, the applicant's project includes the collaborative efforts and provision of resources from various project partners (pages e58 – e60).

To demonstrate and underscore the commitment of partners, detailed Letters of support are included in the appendices.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include details, such as a post grant multi-year financial model, which would show how specific components of the project would be sustained when federal assistance ends. Including such details would add credence to the applicant's assertion that resources are in place to operate the project beyond the 3-year grant period.

Reader's Score: 27

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 proposes to address this priority by providing multiple civic learning experiences throughout the school year and summer that move students beyond classrooms and into communities (page e16).

For instance, activities such as the monthly student congress experiences for 6th - 8th graders (page e26; e35), will provide students with hands-on training in civic leadership and will afford them the opportunity to meet with community leaders to identify, research, and generate policy proposals on real issues of community concern. This type of innovative activity is an important learning strategy and will likely lead to achievement of intended project impacts.

An important component of the applicant's plan is the professional development to effectively engage students in the "Participate" curriculum, which integrates learning about the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights with other civics topics such as learning about the Bill of Rights while preparing a community violence prevention campaign. This type of innovation ensures that students have the skills and knowledge to actively participate and engage in civic processes (pages e29 – e31)

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:

The applicant intends to address issues of equity and access by aptly placing and operating the project in under-resourced, neighborhood based public schools that have high diversity (i.e., high levels of varied race, culture, faith, economic, and language, pages e22-e23).

Community organizations will play an active role in in working with the applicant to meet this priority by collaborating and convening town hall meetings and sponsoring student summer internships (pages e35-e37). These activities will bode well for the improvement and engagement of not only students but community members as well.

Moreover, the Community Coordinator is a key driver of community involvement, engagement and service learning, which are all critical activities of the project and which solidly address the CPP. This position will have responsibility to network with and gather community organizations and other partners to identify issues and strategies that students can be engaged in – the main premise of the proposed project (page e45).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 7

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2023 04:45 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Loyola University of Chicago (S422B230041)

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 | 28 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 98 |
| 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 | 110 |

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Loyola University of Chicago (S422B230041)

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 applicant approaches the project with the understanding that every student, teacher, administrator, school, and community bring experiences, skills, talents, and insights to engage the democratic process. (e23).

PDC utilizes an asset-based approach to learning and doing to form the foundation of their work in schools and communities. (e24).

PDC will anchor Principals and other lead administrators as a part of the program. Network meetings and site-based meetings will be utilized to gain their insight and feedback about the project's implementation. (e26-e27).

Within the PDC framework Pre-Service Teacher Candidates will have the opportunity to learn about civics education pedagogy and curriculum via a Summer Institute. (e27).

PDC allots in-service teachers the opportunity to learn, engage, and participate in professional development regarding a thematic approach to US History and historical inquiry. (e29).

PDC will access and organize for students a comprehensive academic set of experiences that utilize the CPS Participate curriculum to provide project and community-based exploratory opportunities to support student learning and engagement. (e30-e35).

PDC will embed the partnership of working with a leading community organization to anchor social change to address housing, mental health, and youth development. (e36).

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 applicant notes that students in American public schools do not have equitable access to civic learning opportunities. (e38).

PDC underscores that teachers need a new framework of professional support and engagement to tackle the challenge of preparing our students for active engagement in understanding democracy. (e38-e39).

PDC acknowledges that many teachers in American public schools tend to face isolation from their peers. (e40).

The PDC project will establish systems of collaboration, networking, and resource sharing to strengthen practices that benefit the students. (e40).

The applicant notes the need to acknowledge and orient students toward local learning and engagement in order to become connected to the local community and contribute to its' well-being. (e41).

The application for PCS is to generate relationships, learning opportunities, and resources that target members of a community least likely to have access. (e42).

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:

Due to its' historical commitment and positive contributions throughout the community the applicant has secured multiple letters of support. (e42-e43).

PDC will establish an Advisory Council seated with community and student leaders, students, university faculty and staff to convene on a monthly basis to guide and implement the proposed project. (e45).

The PDC project will be staffed and operationalized by both full time and part time positions to implement the goals and

objectives of the grant. (e44-e45).

PDC will provide financial support to both teachers in order for them to participate fully and to a fellow school staff member who can support communication, recruitment, and participation within the school. (e46).

PDC established an exceptional three-year timeline and provided key milestones to indicate the achievement of the goals narrated in the proposal of providing students with multiple civic learning opportunities to enable them to practice democracy in their communities. (e46-e47).

Feedback and Continuous Improvement is embedded in the PDC proposal and reflects the premise that all voices are valued and an important component for the success of the project. (e53).

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:

The applicant brings a vast amount of institutional resources, including human; intellectual; physical; systems; and financial to the proposed project. (e60).

PDC demonstrates that the costs associated with the breadth and depth of the project proposal are both reasonable and sufficient to ensure a successful community-based initiative. (e60).

The entity has a history of demonstrating a strong commitment to mutually beneficial, place-based engagement opportunities with partner schools (e61).

The applicant demonstrates it has significant institutional resources and relationships in place to sustain emerging work and the capacity to generate a model for the rest of local school districts to emulate regarding democracy education in diverse settings. (e62-e63).

The applicant has secured the commitment and support of the leadership of Chicago Public Schools. (e64).

PDC evidenced letters of support from multiple stakeholders including principals, district and community leaders, and elected officials who firmly support the goals outlined in the proposed project. (e64).

Weaknesses:

However, it was noted that the applicant does not include details, such as a post grant multi-year financial model, which would show how specific components of the project would be sustained when federal assistance ends. Including such details would add credence to the applicant's assertion that resources were in place to operate the project beyond the 3-year grant period.

Reader's Score: 28

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 provide innovative teaching and a learning curriculum coupled with pedagogical support to enable teachers to provide high quality, innovative civics education and instruction in US History. (e15)

The applicant addresses the initiative by providing professional development through communities of practice to enact curriculum in civics education and US History that frames student learning in context toward civic action. (e16).

PDC provides multiple civic learning experiences throughout the school year and summer that move students beyond classrooms and into communities. (e16).

PDC selected communities are both deeply diverse and communities with a long history of poor health, education, housing and academic outcomes for people of limited means. (e19-e20).

PDC will utilize the Participate curriculum with teachers to launch civic education courses that address the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights in order to position students to dynamically integrate civic inquiry and engagement with course content. (e28-e29).

PDC will offer teachers the opportunity to participate in the collective work of community organizations in order to address the needs of the community through student engagement with civic action projects. (e30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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:

PDC promotes equity in student access by locating their work in under-resourced, neighborhood-based public schools with high levels of race, culture, faith, economic, and language diversity. (e16).

PDC will take place in a host of elementary schools to high schools and notes that social studies education and high-quality civics education cannot be constrained to the classroom. (e30).

PDC will allot a high-quality civics education through skilled and supported civics teachers who utilize the Participate curriculum to create engaging, exploratory curriculum that centers democracy, civic action and simulations. (e31).

PDC students will have access to enhanced learning opportunities including Speak Up Democracy – a 2-week on-campus, overnight summer program that integrates the humanities with civic learning. (e32).

The applicant will provide participating schools and students the opportunity to experience Model UN Conference and Immersive Museum Experiences. The Immersive Museum Experience allots teachers and students the opportunity to take field trips to Chicago History Museum and the Pullman National Historical Park to make explicit connections between their own lived experiences and instructional content presented in the classroom. (e33).

During the summer, students will have the opportunity to participate in six-week internships. Students will be placed in community organizations of interest to them and work alongside community leaders to develop a deeper understanding of community organizations and how they can contribute their ideas within the local community. (e37).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 7

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 02:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Loyola University of Chicago (S422B230041)

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 | 26 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 96 |
| 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 | 108 |

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Loyola University of Chicago (S422B230041)

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 presents a clear outline of the rationale. The applicant stated that half of the American public is unhappy with American democracy. Hyper-partisanship is driving some of the malcontent towards democracy. They see the divides emerging on most every issue today. It is no longer about the issue itself but based on which side of the political spectrum one stands. The strong ties to the democratic systems, institutions, and processes are falling by the wayside as more and more individuals align themselves with their tribes. The applicant considers the fact that they are no longer providing high quality instruction about the government and civic institutions and processes as a contributing factor to the discontent with the democracy (Alliance for Representative Democracy, 2003; Boyer, 1990; Cogan, 1999). Long a mainstay in American public schools, instruction in civics fell to the wayside in the 1980's and, with few exceptions, continues to be the case (Carnegie Corporation of America, 2011; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003). If young people are not provided high quality education to understand, access, and enact their systems of governance, they will feel powerless and dissatisfied with our democracy (Rubin, 2006). (e18) The applicant provided a logic model that aligns with the goals and objective for successful outcomes. (e71, Attachment)

ii. The applicant shows clear approach. The applicant argued that asset-based learning and doing underpins school and community work. PDC will teach, study, and engage in civics education using a critical civic engagement paradigm (Schmidt, 2021). Watts et al. (2007) claim that most US civic education involves passing on traditional knowledge and abilities. Critical civic engagement (CCE) proposes that: 1) learning begins with and through the lived experiences of students situated in their own contexts relative to existing communities, cultures, civic organizations, institutions, and social processes; 2) students have opportunities to both interrogate and critique the existing social and political orders; and 3) students have relevant, informed CCE purposefully creates civic identity in kids by engaging their lived civic experiences. The applicant wants students to think about their values, how they want to solve challenges in a democracy, and how they see themselves as democratic agents.

Weaknesses:

i. None noted.

ii. None 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:

- i. The applicant shows severe need. Democracy is losing favor with Americans. Democracy dissatisfies almost 50% of Americans. Less than half of US adults can identify basic information about American democracy (branches of government, basic rights and liberties, etc.), a dramatic fall over the past several years. American confidence and knowledge of democracy and its institutions are declining. In 2022, 20% of American students were advanced or proficient, down 1% from 2018. "Many students without a strong foundation and understanding of the subjects are entering high schools where civics and history are facing highly politicized debates over content and instruction." US history is even worse. 13% of 2022 students scored advanced or proficient. There are several reasons at play here, but many public-school districts across the nation discontinued civic education classes in the 1980s (Cogan, 1999) and are only now bringing them back.(e37-e38)
- ii. Uptown, Edgewater, and Rogers Park surround Loyola University on Chicago's northeast side. The applicant gives a thorough graphic showing these towns' diversity. One of the best locations to learn democratic values, skills, and information is in diverse US communities. The applicant proposes to work with the following six schools (with the capacity to add 1-2 more) to strengthen instructional approaches, organize and coordinate resources, and provide professional development and learning opportunities for more engaging, powerful civic learning. High-quality civic learning experiences prepare children for lifetime civic participation (Flanagan, et al., 2010). Loyola University Chicago is located in some of the nation's most diverse communities to foster democratic learning and participation. The applicant wants to collaborate with neighborhood public schools. (e21-e22)
- iii. The applicant's suggested initiative will clearly serve the needs of the target population. Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown are varied and integrated. Due to selective enrollment and choice systems, neighborhood public schools have become less white and wealthier than the surrounding community. Loyola University Chicago is devoted to social justice and helping historically underprivileged communities in these spaces. The applicant creates relationships, learning opportunities, and resources for underserved community members. Example of our commitment. The School of Education established the 30-student Speak Up Democracy program in summer 2023. The applicant recruited only from local public schools. (e41-e42)

Weaknesses:

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

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 clearly presents a management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. Loyola University Chicago will be the lead fiscal and program agent for Practicing Democracy in Communities with the School of Education providing organizational leadership, structure, and support. PI for this project. He will provide oversight and guidance to the project. Schmidt brings more than 30 years of experience in developing, guiding, implementing, and evaluating civic education initiatives through his work with community organizations, congregations, schools, school systems, and universities. (e41-e44) The PDC Advisory Council will be constituted to gather community and school leaders, students, and university faculty and staff monthly to guide and implement the project. The Advisory Council will be an opportunity for key stakeholders to identify emerging issues, develop strategies, evaluate desired outcomes, and consider course corrections. PDC will be staffed by the following full-time positions: Project Director, Instructional Coordinator, Community Organizer, Student Voice Coordinator. The Project Director will be responsible for providing direction, coordination, and oversight and accountability for PDC. The applicant provides a comprehensive timeline that depicts the capacity of the management plan to carry out accomplishing the task within budget and timely. (e45-e53)

ii. Given that the PDC project involves numerous stakeholder organizations, institutions, and people, the applicant explicitly provides feedback and continual development, which will be essential to the success of this program. The PDC effort is founded on the idea that every stakeholder will have a say and that their opinions matter for the project's success. This notion is consistent with asset-based community development approaches, which emphasize the value of local residents' distinctive and significant insights into the operations of their community. The following categories will provide possibilities for stakeholder input. The Project Director will oversee the PDC Advisory Council. Principals, teachers, community partners, university faculty, and students will have the chance to gather at the monthly meetings as important stakeholders to drive and define the PDC initiative's components and direction. (e53-e54)

Weaknesses:

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

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. As a key institution in the community, the applicant has a long history of involvement in the local school and community. The applicant holds that universities have a fundamental moral and ethical duty to engage their communities and do more than just occupy space. To bring faculty, staff, and students into regular and active interaction with the community through teaching and learning, professional development, service, research, and assessment, a plethora of programs, initiatives, and projects have developed from every part of the university. Schools, departments, and campus centers have intensified their attention over the past 20 years on place-based engagement and mutual benefit as key components of their interaction with local institutions and groups. In order to implement its apprenticeship approach of teacher development, LUC's School of Education partners with more than 25 neighborhood-based public schools in the local area. A well-known apprenticeship-based teacher education program in the country is Teaching Learning and Leading in Schools and Communities (TLLSC). For more than 1,100 hours, the students spend time in schools as part of their teacher preparation curriculum. (e59-e60)
- ii. The applicant stated that the costs associated with the breadth and depth of this project are reasonable and sufficient to launch and sustain this work. Additionally, the applicant wants to help schools and neighborhood organizations financially so that kids, teachers, and community leaders can participate fully. Special Projects Manager (\$30,000) and Evaluation Coordinator (\$19,800), with 3% increments each succeeding year, are the two part-time roles that PDC plans to fill. The Graduate Assistant will be paid \$28,000 the first year, increasing by 3% the following year. A new Graduate Assistant will be hired for the third year, and their pay will return to \$28,000. To guarantee that all initiatives are completed with proper assistance and fidelity, these positions will serve crucial supporting responsibilities (e84). LUC supplements this money with a variety of in-kind contributions, including physical space, research know-how, faculty, staff, and student volunteerism, as well as relationship know-how. The costs represent a significant investment in the creation of practices and initiatives. For this project, there is a lot of up-front effort to establish partnerships and programs, but once those are in place, they hope to start working on sustainability. (e60)
- iii. Loyola University has significant institutional resources and relationships in place to sustain emerging work. In 2011, the Mayor of Chicago approached Loyola with a proposal to partner with Senn High School. The City of Chicago provided the first five years of funding. The applicant is now in 11th year of the relationship and continue to build on successful initiatives and generate new projects that reflect the priorities and commitments. This has included expanding the model partnership with Senn High School to include an additional five schools in the Rogers Park community. The work as a Lead Partner Agency with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Community Schools Initiative (CSI) reflects the ongoing work that began with a proposal to CPS to work with four community schools has now expanded to eight. They have built significant institutional supports to sustain this work; the work that they have done through these initiatives transform and is transforming the work in the School of Education. (e46-e47, e62)
- iv. The applicant provided letters of support from principals, district, and community leaders, and elected officials reflect the commitments from the partners. The proposal reflects emerging work with ongoing partners in the community that reflects the depth of the relationships and the opportunity to create a systemic approach to civic learning in the

communities, which will enable us to develop democratic skills, knowledge, dispositions, and identity as we practice democracy. (e63-e65)

Weaknesses:

i. None noted.

ii. None noted.

iii. The applicant did not include a multiyear financial and operating model as well as an accompanying plan for their resources; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders. The applicant did not include a letter of support from SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions or more than one of these types of evidence. These are all essential to the project's long-term success. (e63)

iv. None noted.

Reader's Score: 26

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 addresses the Absolute Priority of innovative instruction or professional development by providing professional development through communities of practice to enact curriculum in civics education and US History that prioritizes student learning in context toward civic action. PDC address the Competitive Preference of innovative activities for civic engagement by providing multiple civic learning experiences throughout the school year and summer that move students beyond classrooms and into communities. The conceptual foundation for action is rooted in asset-based community development (ABCD) and the framework for civic learning is critical civic engagement. ABCD grounds the work of a community in the principles of strengths-based approaches, partnership development, and local self-determination. The pedagogical framework—critical civic engagement—has three fundamental components: 1) engages the lived experience of students (Cohen, Kahne & Marshall, 2018); 2) develops and encourages critical thought (Bermudez, 2014); and 3) generates and supports informed civic action (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; LeCompte & Blevins, 2015; Levinson, 2012). (e16-e17)

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 stated that PDC address Competitive Preference Priority #2 promoting equity in student access by locating work in under-resourced, neighborhood based in public schools with high levels of race, culture, faith, economic, and language diversity. (e16-17)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 7

Status: Submitted

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