

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2023 06:32 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: iCivics, Inc. (S422B230022)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	18
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	25	22
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	22
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	85
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement</b>		
1. Civic Engagement	5	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	4
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>Student Access to Resources and Opportunities</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	7	6
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	6
<b>Total</b>	112	95

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - AHC-NA - 3: 84.422B

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

Applicant: iCivics, Inc. (S422B230022)

## 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 focus on educators and professional development of civics teachers is an innovative approach to improved civics learning.
- The curriculum presented in the application contains core learning modules, including American history content; principles of U.S. government and comparative political philosophy; inquiry-based learning; and information literacy. (e14) These are strong curricular building blocks.
- Being a master of the kind of challenging content required for robust civics education is a goal of this program. The applicant has also highlighted qualities of teachers who attend this training to include increased critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration with their peers. (e19)
- The application contains a robust budget line for supporting teachers and school districts with deserved financial incentives for their participation. (e113)

#### Weaknesses:

- Continuous improvement requires strong quantitative data collection, beyond the qualitative measures listed in the grant.
- The approach to quantitative data collection and analysis is ambiguous. (see above, e19).
- There are insufficient funds earmarked for quantitative evaluation in this application, with only \$80,000 of the budget will be spent on evaluation. (e112)

Reader's Score: 18

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)

ii. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)

iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on

**those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

**Strengths:**

- This project covers 1,120 social studies educators in a broad geography. This number is robust, but manageable for the purposes of the project. (e14)
- The applicant explains the need for durable, ongoing, professional development for social studies educators, which is much needed in the dynamic and ever-changing realms of information and media literacy, democracy, and civic empowerment.
- The grant states, "Teachers will receive hands-on professional development focused on instructional strategies, curricular strategies, and content delivery." (e20) These strategies are critically important to evaluation and continuous improvement.

**Weaknesses:**

- In order to continuously observe, analyze, and revise aspects of the program, there needs to be continuous improvement work done by the applicant, which may require an increased budget for assessment and evaluation. (e112)
- Feedback and the refinement of materials based on user input would allow the applicant to accelerate their work in this space.

**Reader's Score: 22**

**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 work of baseline research with participating districts is a strong addition to the proposed plan. (e42) There is a commitment to "continuously observe, analyze, and revise aspects of the program," as part of continuous improvement, (e44) and exit interviews will be conducted for further refinement. (e44)
- A new hire for the position of Chief Learning Services Officer will supplement an existing team of staff members and a new Director and an Associate of Professional Learning to oversee contractors. (e44-e46)

**Weaknesses:**

- The strong emphasis on asynchronous learning and self-paced design could prove to be a challenge for already busy educators. Was there any advance work done to pilot either the lessons or feedback forms with potential participants? (e70-72, e99-106)
- There are letters of support from school district leaders who not included in the pilot project. These are less persuasive for the purposes of this grant application, but these letters speak clearly to the demand for future educational efforts, should this pilot be successful. (e87-95)

### 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 use of the Department of Defense-funded iCSL program for the online delivery of learning modules is a smart use of resources. (e46)
- The work of district and teacher recruitment is well-defined in the work plan. (e40-42, e48)
- The applicant demonstrates a commitment to supporting participation through teacher-stipends, reimbursement for substitute teachers, and other means to ensure continued educator-participation in professional learning programs. (e48)

#### Weaknesses:

- Despite the fiscal restraint applied by the applicant, the requested award amount is still large, compared to the number of project participants. 12 districts in 3 years seems like a small number, especially with all the pilots being in one geographic area. (However, the number of teachers fulfilling their commitment to the learning outcomes and training is 1120). (e27)
- While there are statements made about historic underfunding of civics and history curricula, there is no evidence offered to support these assumptions. (e49) (unless the data are contained in the bibliography (e51-55, "Narrative Resources"))

### 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 has a reputation for designing and delivering high quality civic-learning curricula. They define themselves as “existing to re-imagine civic education.” (e14)
- The application states that “Pilot participants spent the summer working through online modules: covering best practices in civic education; game-based learning; iCivics’ tech platform; and applications of innovative approaches. (e15) This provides confidence that teachers will engage in the project.
- Participants in the pilot reported they would recommend the experience to their peers. (e15) This provides confidence in the reviewer that the project’s components will be achieve participation among teachers.
- The use of curricula which includes daily vocabulary routines for semantically loaded terms; language and content integration; metacognition and metalinguistic awareness; and assessments of content and language that correlate to the English Language Success Forum [ELSF] Benchmarks of Quality is both unique in civics education but could be applied more rigorously to all curricula in middle and high schools. (e24)

**Weaknesses:**

- The application states, “The Framework that inspired this curriculum is unique: it fuses, often for the first time, the linked subjects of civics and history. It brings them together under one large curriculum, sharing overarching thematic questions, key concepts, and resources. Importantly, the training around the EAD Framework aims to develop a better, more inclusive, and culturally relevant history and civics curriculum.” (e21) There is no narrative to support HOW this will be done, especially in school communities fractured by low resources and lack of time to incorporate new content in the history curriculum.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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:**

- Rural and underserved schools will be chosen to participate in this pilot and schools will receive stipends to support participation. (e22)
- The program for which the applicant seeks funds “incorporates inquiry design and culturally responsive practices while promoting disciplinary literacy, deeper content knowledge, and viewpoint pluralism...This CPL Pathway prepares educators to deliver full and accurate histories that can cultivate reflective patriotism and empower all learners as knowledgeable civic agents.” (e23)
- The applicant demonstrates a commitment to family communication (in English and Spanish) with newsletters and family engagement toolkits. (e24)
- “Place-based Localization” of curriculum content offers the opportunity to bring community topics and local history into the classroom, more deeply addressing the civic life of the community in which these students and their families live. (e59)

**Weaknesses:**

- With a project focused on teacher professional development (e63-67), there was a lack of information presented in the application on student experience and outcome.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/03/2023 06:32 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2023 11:57 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: iCivics, Inc. (S422B230022)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	20
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	25
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	26
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	96
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement</b>		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>Student Access to Resources and Opportunities</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	7	6
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	6
<b>Total</b>	112	107



# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - AHC-NA - 3: 84.422B

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

Applicant: iCivics, Inc. (S422B230022)

## 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 demonstrates a well-developed rationale for the proposed project. The proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities established for the competition.

The narrative presents a stance to create a thorough, customizable, and evidence-based professional learning program focused on civics education.

With the already national reputation as a civics education provider, iCivics specifies its asset of being designed to focused on helping teachers through professional development (p. e14 - e15).

For example, iCivics' Absolute Priority proposes to focus on a comprehensive, blended, and customizable professional learning program to promote civic education for teachers and other leaders using best practices, such as coaching and peer-support (pp. e17-e18).

The proposed project proposes to address Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) 1 via hands-on innovative Civics Education activities for teachers, such as professional development on instructional strategies, curricular strategies, and content delivery (p. e. 20).

The proposed project proposes to address CPP 2 via a high-quality professional development program for K-12 teachers to aide all the students with the selection priority favoring rural districts and those serving high proportions of disadvantaged students or have a diversity of under-served settings (pp. e21 - e22).

The Instructional Priority is proposed to be addressed though the professional development which will promote critical thinking and foster student engagement in Civic Education (p. e25).

#### 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 magnitude of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project is a great concern. The gaps in opportunities to be addressed by the plan consist of providing ongoing professional development for educators and educational leaders responsible for providing civic education for students. Providing opportunities to received professional development to support social studies teachers is missing or inadequate (pp. e 29 – e30).

For example, social studies teachers (72%) are among the least likely to stay engaged in professional learning, compared to 83% on average in other disciplines according to the School and Staffing Survey, SASS, 2011-12. Effective teaching evolves from study, reflecting, practice, and refining one's instructional strategies and content knowledge. The proposed plan to provide professional development for teachers responsible for teaching Civics education will promote continuous professional learning and build greater teacher efficacy.

Also, a national research report by RAND revealed that elementary and secondary civics teaches reported not feeling well-prepared to support students in civic education (p. e28). The applicant presents a convincing approach to addressing the gaps in professional development for teachers of civic education to provide high quality professional learning services that are individualized, self-paced, and teacher certification programs (p. e32). The opportunities for Social Studies teachers to grow professionally tends to yield more students understanding when they read and write about civics.

The proposed project adequately provides the services focused on the greatest needs. The aim of iCivics is to create a system to offer high quality professional learning in a sustainable way (p. e32). The professional learning services to be provided teachers by the proposed project reflect relevant, current knowledge from action research and effective practices.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
  - i. **The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (13 points)**
  - ii. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant presents a concise management plan that is aligned with the program's objectives. The procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project are adequate.

As indicated on pages e37 – e42, for example, the plan includes clearly delineated responsibilities of personnel as well as key activities, objectives, and a thorough timeline, for accomplishing project tasks. For example, the management plan identifies who will be responsibility for each key task as evident on pages e39 – e4, which clearly supports the intended purpose of the principal investigator is to oversee the project design and implementation in addition to ensuring proper compliance, administration, and reporting. to yield the intended outcomes.

On page e42, it is presented that iCivics will use the tools of improvement science to monitor progress, test small changes, and ensure all teachers' own voice helps to design the program content and roll-out. Adhering to components of the continuous improvement cycle will help the applicant obtain greater project success.

Baseline data will be collected to understand educators' perspective on how they experience civic and history. The data will be analyzed on quantitative and qualitative feedback from educator participants and district patterners (e.30). Gathering feedback from educators helps administrators or other leaders foster more positively enhanced educational outcomes.

**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 proposed project presents adequate support from the applicant organization or lead applicant organization. The costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The proposed project demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant.

For example, CPL has possess advantages, experiences, and skills and effectively delivered the professional development program synchronous and asynchronous in several states (p. e44). Providing learning and growth opportunities in multiple ways will help and support learner needs and learning preference.

Hiring the first Chief Learning Services Officer and providing support from the Chief Development Officer, Director of State Professional Programs, and others in conjunction with a Learning Management System (LMS), aligned to the projective

outcomes (pp. e44 – 45).

The costs are reasonable as presented by the number of trips being minimum and all travel costs would fully align to the GSA travel guidelines (p. 48). The budget identifies the funds that will be used to support the development and implementation of the proposal.

The proposed project 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. iCivics proposes to create a high quality, modifiable, and scalable programming that can be sustained for a long term with not requirement from philanthropists (p. e45).

The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project has begun.

**Weaknesses:**

The number of partnerships reflects only one school system, Washington, D.C. Public School.

**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 projected proposal will 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.

The proposed projected will 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, the project will include hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; and programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

**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 projected proposal will demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school to engagement students in civic related opportunities.

The application demonstrates that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in grades K-12, all students (p. e21). The proposed project specifies 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. The proposed project proposes to address CPP 2 via a high-quality professional development program for K-12 teachers to aide all the students with the selection priority favoring rural districts and those serving high proportions of disadvantaged students or have a diversity of under-served settings (pp. e21 - e22).

**Weaknesses:**

The performance measures are not measurable as it relates to the projected outcomes.

**Reader's Score:** 6

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/04/2023 11:57 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2023 09:27 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: iCivics, Inc. (S422B230022)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	20
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	25
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	26
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	96
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement</b>		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>Student Access to Resources and Opportunities</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	7	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	5
<b>Total</b>	112	106

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - AHC-NA - 3: 84.422B

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

Applicant: iCivics, Inc. (S422B230022)

## 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's comprehensive approach in implementing this project for improving civics learning is through a program of professional development described on pages e14-e16. The applicant already has the curriculum to be implemented and therefore will focus on building the instructional capacity educators need to provide civic education. The proposed project has a number of characteristics that will engage the interest and commitment of educators by making available to them a "menu of comprehensive, customizable and blended professional learning" (page e16), including pathways of learning that are both synchronous and asynchronous and learning designs that incorporate best practices (page e18).

The logic model on page e27 provides a succinct overview of the project showing clear inputs, activities, and outputs intended to result in measurable outcomes for teachers and for students.

(ii) The applicant demonstrates evidence of exceptional approaches to the priorities for the competition. The first one is that pathways of learning, based on a large body of research and best practices (page e18), available to teachers and the administrators who support them, will bridge civic education with information literacy.

The applicant incorporates in the project features of professional learning referenced on pages e18-e19 as identified in Darling-Hammond, Hylar, and Gardner 's (2017) meta-analysis of studies relative to effective professional learning. The applicant also describes how it will provide continuous observation, analysis, and revision based on quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants and partners.

#### Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses.

(ii) No weaknesses.

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 references data from multiple sources, including the Department of Education, Kaplan (2022) and the School and Staffing Survey, SASS (2011-12) to illuminate the challenges faced by teachers in trying to access and stay engaged in social studies professional development compared to other disciplines (page e28).

Some of the issues stem from the lack of consistent academic standards, policies and assessment programs from one state to another as described on page e29, as well as a lack of coherent professional learning helping teachers to not only experience but also to practice new methods of instruction.

The applicant references researchers on page e30, including Kawshima-Ginsberg (2014), whose studies have shown a lack of civic education for students to become informed participants in civic and political life and greater disparities in the quality of civic education among schools serving low-income, minority, and immigrant communities.

(ii) The application includes a comprehensive look at the gaps and weaknesses inherent in current professional learning models, especially recognizing the workloads and time constraints faced by civics educators.

The applicant organization conducts annual surveys of teachers using its services and a 2022 survey identified on-demand coursework that teachers access at their own pace as what is in demand (page e33). The proposed project will address those gaps in several ways, as described on pages e33-e34. One way is that one model is presented in a format blending online with face-to-face instruction, while the other models will be virtual. Another way is to ensure that the professional learning done through the project is able to be applied toward the teachers' in-service requirements.

(iii) The applicant describes on page e35 two ways in which the proposed project will provide services to student with the greatest needs. The applicant will partner with school districts serving diverse and high-needs student populations and will provide professional learning content created to support diverse learners no matter their learning or social backgrounds.

The one school district that has committed to the project is described on page e35 as serving 49,035 students, many of whom are considered disadvantaged due to poverty (75%), at risk for homelessness (45%), are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (83%), or are English Language Learners (16%). The applicant further describes on page e36-e37 the steps the project will take to ensure its services will reach those with the greatest needs.

In addition, the applicant includes in the Objectives and Performance Measures document on page e129 the following specific Project Objective: Recruit diverse partner-districts to implement the Initiative.

**Weaknesses:**

(i) No weaknesses.

(ii) No weaknesses.

(iii) No weaknesses.

**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 provides a brief review of the management team members on page e38 as well as complete resumes for key personnel included in Appendix C beginning on page e148. The resumes make it clear that all personnel have the qualifications as well as pertinent experiences to contribute to the successful implementation of the project. A complete timeline is provided on pages e40-e42 that lists project activities and objectives and identifies the key personnel responsible for all phases of the project. It is evident that the applicant has the appropriate personnel and planning necessary for the implementation of the project on time and within budget.
- (ii) The application includes comprehensive steps to be taken to provide continuous evaluation throughout the length of the project. The applicant describes on page e42 that “tools of improvement science” will be used to document learning and test changes, and to ensure that the voices of participant educators influence the program content. The applicant specifies on page e43 the goal to not only shape, test, and refine the program content but to also use data collected from the participants to inform the next year’s program. Examples of feedback participants will be asked for are shown on page e43, including that educators might be asked if they know what is expected of them, how they will integrate the learning into their practice, and are they satisfied with the coursework. The applicant will also query participants as to how learning in virtual formats contributes to the participants’ experiences.

**Weaknesses:**

- (i) No weaknesses.
- (ii) No weaknesses.

**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 demonstrates sufficient evidence of the assets of the organization and the experiences and expertise of key personnel to ensure support that is adequate for a successful implementation of the project. The applicant describes on page e14 that it has been in operation since 2009 and describes on page e44 that it has delivered professional development for improving civics education across 15 states. The applicant states that its work in the development and delivery of professional learning is currently being supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Defense as well as by private donations (page e44).
- (ii) Sound evidence is provided in the application to support the costs of the project as reasonable in relation to the

objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. As stated on page e47, the applicant is building organizational capacity to create a sustainable and scalable program of professional development. All professional learning is created for both in person and virtual delivery, making the project services affordable and accessible for all schools and especially for those in rural areas and other low-income areas (page e47).

An example of cost-effective practices is included on page e48, wherein the applicant describes that the number of trips necessary to accommodate the work of the project are kept to a minimum and travel costs adhere to GSA travel guidelines.

(iii) The application documents on page e49-e50 a sound plan for developing and delivering professional development beyond the length of the grant in a way that doesn't require ongoing influxes of financial resources. A critical component is that the person overseeing the project design and implementation was hired by the applicant organization for the specific purpose of building a professional learning program that will be sustained by earned revenue (page e44). The applicant states on page e46 the program design of the learning pathways allows for efficient and low-cost modification and deployment, requiring fewer resources in the future.

(iv) The applicant's evidence of the relevance and commitment of project partners is described on pages e49-e50, and six letters of support are included on pages e86-e95. The applicant has a commitment from one major partner district described on page e49 and is actively seeking commitments from other school districts.

**Weaknesses:**

(i) No weaknesses.

(ii) No weaknesses.

(iii) No weaknesses.

(iv) The application includes limited evidence of partner school districts that are committed to the project. As shown on page e49, only one partner district is committed for the first year out of the four districts the plan is built upon. The first year is identified as a planning year for the project, but it is critical to secure those partnerships in a timely fashion so that the partner schools can also be involved in the planning. The application would be strengthened with more specific evidence of partner commitments. (4 points not awarded)

**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:**

(a) The proposed project is designed to provide teachers with hands-on professional learning, described on page e20 as focused on instructional strategies, curricular strategies, and content delivery.

(b) The Educating for Democracy (EAD) framework, linking civics and history in one curriculum, is described as the inspiration for the first project pathway which will include the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

**Weaknesses:**

- (a) No weaknesses.
- (b) No weaknesses.

**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:**

(b) The applicant describes the first learning pathway on page e23 a primary source-rich, project-embedded curriculum with an overarching narrative of American peoples to be told. Educators will be equipped to help students understand the American past in a holistic way, with accurate histories available to all learners.

(c) The curriculum used by the applicant in the project pathways includes characteristics to provide access to all learners. Among the characteristics described on page e23 are scaffolded learning, grade level reading and writing tasks, and vocabulary routines to address the loaded terms common in social studies curriculum. Other components of the pathway include hands-on projects and activities that allows students to participate in a safe, but real-world setting.

(d) The application includes descriptions of EAD content that “identifies high-priority history and civics content essential for authentic civic participation” (page e22), allowing teacher to deepen student learning. Content units have the potential to engage students in taking informed action such as writing to a public official (page e24). The applicant also has a family engagement toolkit to support the home-to-school connection for students and families (page e24-25).

**Weaknesses:**

(d) The applicant provides no evidence of a project that will provide students and families opportunities for leadership. (2 points not awarded)

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

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