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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)
Reader #1: **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	15
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	38
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	66
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	2
	Sub Total	5	2
	Total	105	68

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

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

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. **The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 15

   Sub

   1. **The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.**

   Strengths:

   The proposed project involves the development of a promising new strategy that builds on an existing strategy. The applicant has developed an innovative strategy that couples adaptive, personalized early learning software; (Waterford Learning & Adaptive Young Learner Assessment) (E74) for students with targeted parental engagement that is supplemented by on-site and remote guidance from project personnel (E74). This promising strategy is one that builds upon current strategies that aim to improve early education for students in rural settings. There is a clear rationale for selecting this strategy as it seeks to address the achievement gap of rural students. The applicant supports the significance and need for his promising strategy by offering relevant research that depicts the current challenges of rural areas to improve their students' early reading and math skills; especially in the southern United States. For example, research findings indicated that of the 341 US districts identified in persistent poverty; over 80% were in the South and nearly 20% of all the counties in the South were in persistent poverty (E71). Also, only half of children in rural areas have access to public or private center-based preschools and, rural children lag 2-3 points behind children living in small urban and suburban areas (E72). The applicant has provided sufficient evidence of the significance of the proposed project.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were found.

   Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 38

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant has developed an effective strategy that aims to address the significant barrier of rural geographical isolation that hinders the implementation of programs to combat student educational gaps and deficits (E72). The applicant clearly lists the barriers as availability of services, transportation, performance fidelity, parental preferences, and local priorities (E81). The proposed project seeks to reach a significantly increased level of scale that has not been reached leading to an access gap (E72). The applicant has proposed these strategies to effectively improve the educational outcomes for rural students, parents, and communities. The rationale for this strategy is that research indicates that parenting style and home learning environment account for 40% of income-related learning gaps (E81). To meet this challenge, project services will be offered in a continuum of settings: fully home; fully school or hybrid (E81). The strategy is cost-efficient based on its projected per-pupil cost and decreases the associated costs of hiring additional personnel, increasing the cost of transportation, and finding additional sites for offering services (E82).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were found.

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant has developed a management plan that will sufficiently achieve the objectives of the proposed project. In addition, there is ample evidence that the proposed project will be completed on time and within budget. For example, the applicant has developed four clearly articulated goals combined with specific objectives as the foundation of a management plan that has a higher likelihood of successful implementation (E110-114). The list of key personnel offers additional evidence of adequate management effectiveness and it explicitly describes the duties and responsibilities of key personnel. Some of the key personnel possess the requisite training and experience to accomplish project tasks (E115). For example, the Project Director is assigned primary responsibility for the overall coordination and reporting of the project(E116). The project management plan timeline clearly lists specific achievable milestones within each goal and objective (E110-114). These are significant milestones (development, expansion, validation & dissemination) within the management plan and are linked to demonstration activities that will likely lead to the successful completion of project activities (E114). The budget is aligned with project goals, objectives, and outcomes and is sufficient to support the demonstration activities as part of the scale-up (E339).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were found.

   Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

Strengths:

The application depicts a moderate capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a national level by working through its partners during the grant period. There is sufficient evidence that the applicant will effectively utilize the assistance of its stakeholders and partners as they both identified the partners and roles they propose for them. For example, the applicant identified partners: AASA, Early Learning Cohort, HBCUs, IHE, and Head Start. They described the role of HBCUs as a partner in fostering community engagement and building trust within the target population (E89). The applicant also describes a project budget supported by justifications that will effectively support the implementation of the proposed project (E340). For example, the budget explicitly outlines the matching resources from prominent partners. (E115). The applicant also will draw upon its past successful implementation of i3 and 2018 EIR as a proven model for the proposed project (E88).

Weaknesses:

The applicant lists an exhaustive list of partners and stakeholders but only describes the role of a few. In addition, there appears to be limited involvement in implementation by these partners. There is also an absence of parental input in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed project. The parents are an integral component of the project and their views and feedback would serve as a valuable resource.

Reader's Score: 8

4. **(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths:

The applicant has developed an effective plan to broadly disseminate project information that will support further development or replication. Evidence of the quality of its plan is its strategy to emulate the dissemination process from previous successful projects (E84). These proven strategies have a higher probability of leading to an effective distribution of materials to partners and other organizations. The applicant identified multiple strategies including; professional conferences, press releases, events, social media, liaisons, and networking (E84-85). In addition, the project will utilize pilot expansions and extensive partnerships to foster development and replication (E85). These mechanisms have a very high likelihood of significant distribution leading to replication

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 10

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Strengths:

There is a higher likelihood that the products produced from this project will be used effectively in a variety of settings. Evidence of this likely utility is that the applicant's scale-up strategy included increasing access by offering services and information online in a virtual environment. This increases the likelihood that the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be made available to additional locations and settings (E82). The applicant also plans to utilize specific institutions for higher learning' notably HBCUs, that can aid in implementation in additional areas of the nation (E89). The applicant plans to promote increased use by sharing the information without cost and with multiple partners (E82).

Sub

    Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

    Reader's Score: **5**

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:**

Reader's Score: **13**

    Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

    Strengths:

The applicant has developed a higher-quality conceptual framework whose design is supported by relevant research. For example, the Logic Model, which included research references from previous project implementations (E76), also is supported by the research on the value of adaptive learning in meeting the challenge of gaps in literacy attainment (E74). The Logic model clearly indicates the number and types of demonstration activities (E326) and the alignment of these activities to inputs and outputs offers a logical flow for effective implementation. It is also helpful that the Logic Model offers specific outputs from short, intermediate, and long-term intervals, which will allow for both formative and summative evaluation of the proposed project (E325). The conceptual framework is directly aligned with the purpose of the proposed project.

    Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

    Reader's Score: **5**

2. **(2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

    Strengths:

The four goals are specific and measurable and some of the objectives and outcomes are clearly specific and measurable. For example, the four goals align with the purpose of the proposed project, by indicating that they will seek to offer literacy instruction coupled with parental training to rural communities in the southern United States (E74). Some of the objectives and outcomes are specific and measurable and it is clear the year(s) that each of them will be attempted (E110-115).

    Weaknesses:

Some of the objectives are not specific and measurable. For example, the objective: Expand Upstart in the rural south; is not specific and measurable. The applicant fails to offer a numerical goal of states, districts, students, or parents that they aim to reach or serve. This type of objective does not allow for an objective determination of the level of success of the proposed project.

    Reader's Score: **3**

Sub

3. **(3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

   Strengths:

   There is a very high likelihood that the proposed project will successfully address the needs of the target population. The proposed project design does not aim to replace site-based programs, but rather to offer effective services in a format that will reach rural underserved populations (E82). The design seeks to decrease or eliminate transportation costs and increase participation by offering a home-based model (E82).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were found.

   Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 0

   Sub

   1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

      Strengths:

      N/A

      Weaknesses:

      N/A

      Reader's Score: 0

   2. **(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

      Strengths:

      N/A

      Weaknesses:

      N/A

      Reader's Score: 0

   3. **(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.**

Sub

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

   (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
   (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
   (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
   (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

Strengths:

The applicant has included support letters from Jackson State University and Alcorn State University, which are Historically Black Colleges & Universities, which have been listed as partners in the grant application (E89).

Weaknesses:

There are no organizations that meet the criteria for a partner or implementer that is participating in the proposed project. There is no information on how either of these HBCUs would offer services within the grant.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/14/2023 03:30 PM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 07:39 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)
Reader #2: **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	15
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	38
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	66
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
	Total	105	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

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

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. **The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 15

Sub

1. **The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant states the proposed project is supported by strong randomized controlled trial evidence of efficacy, as well as What Works Clearinghouse recommendations for early literacy and math instruction to cost-effectively scale in rural geographical areas (e71). The applicant further states that Upstart is an innovative literacy and math early learning model that is a cost-effective, scalable early childhood intervention. This project seeks to overcome barriers to rural student achievement and develop sustainable models for scaling across rural communities (e73). The program builds capacity for parental engagement with parent training and personalized coaching offered remotely and in-person. The applicant clearly describes how this program is unique. The program targets the most consequential factor in a child's environment, which is the home, by improving the teaching behaviors of the primary caregivers and developing foundational academic and cognitive skills (e74).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness found.

   Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 38

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant states the Upstart program incorporates proven strategies for quality early childhood education to overcome major barriers in rural areas, including the availability of services, cost, transportation, performance fidelity, parental preferences, and local priorities (e81). Access and availability of services is addressed by the program being delivered in a continuum setting of fully home, fully school, or a hybrid. It develops the parents' or primary caregivers' skills as the child's first teacher. Additional classroom space, new staff, or transportation are not needed to access the program and thus remove the most common barriers to site-based programs for rural areas. The program is cost effective at $2100 per child (or $1100 if the household has a device) compared to $5000 for center-based programs or up to $13,000 for Head Start (e371).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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.**

Strengths:

A detailed chart is provided that aligns the project goals and objectives to the persons responsible, performance indicators, and time period during the grant (e110). There are three goals listed with associated objectives. There are several objectives listed for each goal. For example, objective 2-2 states: Beginning May 2024, support Upstart cohorts (summer and school year) implementation and TASK force activities. Project outcomes include signed partner agreements, contact rates, weekly usage data, and family support plans. The expansion grant team list is provided with roles and responsibilities clearly described (e116). Roles include community engagement, project director, chief scientist, national partnership lead, government relations, project management and reporting, and local education agencies. An additional evaluation timeline is also provided.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

Strengths:

The applicant has successfully implemented the program in multiple states and cohorts including Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas. The program was first implemented as an at-home model, but has since expanded to at-home with additional school or other site supports and a fully school or site-delivered model (e83). The applicant has a marketing and public relations team that has already developed salient features of an outreach campaign such as messaging, positioning categories, and audiences. AASA is a project partner and has national reach both with local education institutions, but also with state and federal policy makers. The HBCU partners have regional influence.

Weaknesses:

Information regarding the capacity of qualified personnel and management capacity to bring the proposed project to scale is not clear. The applicant does not describe the project team's roles in previous iterations of the program, or if the team members for this proposed project are the same as previous projects.

Sub

Reader's Score: 8

4. **(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths:

The dissemination methods described are thorough and broad. The applicant has developed a dissemination model from previous pilot projects that will be utilized again (e84). This model consists of: research information, responsive communities, policy information, pilot expansions, partnerships, and commitment to equity and inclusion. The applicant states the Upstart program has received national media attention for its impact and cost-effectiveness. As part of the Responsive Communities component of the dissemination model, the applicant has previously contracted with outside groups to provide media services that include press releases, events, campaign development, and Tier 1 print and broadcast media. The applicant's You Tube channel contains videos of how Upstart is used in Head Start and has over 19,000 impressions. Interviews have had 27,000 views. They also have thousands of followers on social media.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 10

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Strengths:

There appears to be a high utility of the proposed program that will allow it to be used in a variety of settings. The applicant describes their program as compatible in a home setting, in a school setting, or in a hybrid setting. It's cost effectiveness has helped it gain national recognition (e84). The program has been highlighted with the importance of parent choice, outcomes, and reaching underserved and rural populations.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

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:**

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

Sub

Strengths:

A logic model is provided that aligns the program inputs to the activities, participants, and short- to long-term outcomes (e325). The underlying rationale for the project is that there is a lack of early education equity. Children who start behind academically are likely to stay behind academically as well as face other issues later in life such as crime and poverty. References to relevant research are provided that support the premise that the development of strong reading, math, and science skills is intricately linked to economic mobility, successful career options, and contributions to the economic growth of their communities. The applicant provided multiple references to the previous success of Upstart implementation in educational literature (e76), and states that a key focus of this project will be the assessment data provided to further add to the existing data in early childhood education.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

2. **(2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

Strengths:

The applicant adequately describes the project goals and outcomes. There is one goal provided for the project (e110): Develop and expand the Upstart South TASK Force consortium to advance early childhood education priorities across the region and more effectively advance early childhood education priorities in their schools and communities. The project outcomes are listed in the logic model. These include increasing the understanding of child progress and opportunities to improve instruction; increasing access to high-quality curriculum resources and at-home learning experiences; and increasing the development of effective practices for partner success.

Weaknesses:

Many of the objectives are not measurable (e110-e115). Objective two will support Upstart cohorts' implementation and TASK Force activities. Objective three will revise and finalize RCT evaluation design and obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Education. Objective four will share program year outcomes with partners and at the conclusion of the grant disseminate overall program outcomes.

Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

Strengths:

The proposed project has a high likelihood of addressing the needs of the target population. The Upstart program uses two evidence-based software program. Waterford Early Learning is an adaptive and interactive reading, math, and science curriculum with 2500 lessons, 7000 activities, 360 digital books, animated songs, and 450 instructional hours that support state and national early learning standards. The Adaptive Young Learner Assessment is a computer-administered assessment that provides an indication of the child's reading and math readiness and competence. The applicant states the parent feedback on the assessment is high because of the easy-to-read reports (e76). The overall project is focused on early learning for children in rural areas. All aspects of the project are focused on implementing the project to target that population to improve academic readiness.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Sub

    Reader's Score: **5**

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: **0**

    Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: **0**

2. **(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: **0**

3. **(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: **0**

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

Sub

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: **0**

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

    Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

    Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

      (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
      (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
      (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
      (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

    Strengths:

    The applicant is partnering with Jackson State University and Alcorn State University which are HBCUs (e89). Letters of support from both institutions are provided. The applicant states that HBCUs have inherent trust and cultural sensitivities within their communities. These are assets for overcoming barriers of trust that Black families experience with educational organizations and play an important role in participant engagement. Two to four additional HBCU representatives will be recruited to serve on the TASK Force.

    Weaknesses:

    While the applicant states they are partnering with the HBCUs, the roles and responsibilities with regard to project implementation and participation in the project activities is not clear. More information regarding the specific roles of the institutions with implementing and scaling this project is needed. It is not clear how the HBCUs will be involved specifically in implementing this project.

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 07:39 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)
Reader #4: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	27
Sub Total	100	27
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
Sub Total	5	0
Total	105	27

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #4: **********

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. **The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: **0**

   Sub

   1. **The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: **0**

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: **0**

   Sub

   1. **(1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

2. **(2) 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.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

3. **(3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

4. **(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

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:**

Reader's Score: 0

    Sub

    1. **(1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

      Strengths:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      Reader's Score: 0

    2. **(2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

      Strengths:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      Reader's Score: 0

    3. **(3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

      Strengths:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 27

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

   Strengths:

   The evaluation plan will effectively focus on assessing the proposed instructional model in 100 schools and in 100 pre-K programs across four US regions (page e90). Specifically, the applicant indicates the plan focuses on assessing math and reading achievement using two blocked randomized control trials (RCT) focused on two specific groups. One is preschool and the second is elementary grades K through three. The evaluation is designed to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standard without reservations. Included in the trials will be the use of state standardized tests and local district diagnostic tests (page e94). The overall assessment will be conducted by an independent evaluation organization with extensive experience evaluating federal projects. The organization also designed the evaluation plan. The evaluator includes the development of baseline data (page e128) and appropriate statistical analysis for the proposed plan that focuses on English language arts and mathematic achievement levels.

   Weaknesses:

   The plan includes a brief discussion of attrition but does not provide specific numbers or percentages that the applicant considers to be low attrition (page e125). The discussion does not provide any specific steps that will be taken if attrition becomes too high. This lack of information may also impact on the issue of bias which is influenced by attrition rates.

   Reader's Score: 13

2. **(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant indicates that its guidance to others concerning replication regarding testing and other settings is based on three key aspects (page e96). The key aspects are implementation in a diverse setting, differential impact analysis, and the use of data from multiple sources. These three conditions will enable interested stakeholders to consider the replication of the process and results. This information will assist in replicating the project in a variety of settings with different types of data and information that are unique to their setting. The applicant indicates it will make presentations at national conferences.

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness found.

   Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.**

   Strengths:

   The narrative and logic model provided by the applicant describe how the various components of the project interact with each other to achieve short term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes (page e325). The model also describes the specific inputs, activities, and participation that results in the outputs of the proposed project. The model includes such mediators as parent and teacher engagement. The information included is consistent with the program design and illustrates how they interact with each other to achieve the measurable threshold for acceptable

Sub

implementation.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

    Strengths:

    The applicant includes in its management plan an objective that indicates it will share program year outcomes with local, state, and national stakeholders, and legislators (page e114). The activities associated with this objective include meeting with government decision makers, conferencing with early education leaders, and making presentations to national and international academic and policy making meetings.

    Weaknesses:

    The applicant does not provide specific procedures or techniques to provide feedback to the various stakeholders concerning evaluation results. It is unclear how the results of the evaluation process will be shared with others. This lack of information limits the periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes by the stakeholders in the project.

    Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

    Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

    Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

    (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
    (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
    (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
    (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 03:35 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)
Reader #5: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Sub Total	100	28
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
Sub Total	5	0
Total	105	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #5:   **********

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. **The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 0

    Sub

    1. **The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.**

      Strengths:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 0

    Sub

    1. **(1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

      Strengths:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

2. **(2) 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.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

3. **(3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

4. **(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

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:**

Reader's Score: 0

    Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: 0

2. **(2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: 0

3. **(3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

    Strengths:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 28

1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

    Strengths:

    The applicant presents a suitable evaluation plan that includes both an impact and implementation analysis, and if well-implemented, will produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. The research design features 2-level hierarchical linear modeling with the addition of covariates that are intended to enhance the precision of the impact estimates (pg. e95). The evaluation will be led by a well-established external evaluation firm, AIR, that has experience designing and conducting large-scale multi-site evaluations (pg. e66).

    The study sample is ample for rigorous analyses and will include up to 1200 Prekindergarten students from 100 PreK programs and a cohort of 1200 Kindergarten students from 100 elementary schools in two randomized controlled trials (RCTs). The first RCT will look at the impact of the project in Pre-K programs. Pre-K programs will be randomly assigned within blocks to implement the reading or math treatment. The second RCT will examine the impact of the project in elementary schools in grades K to 3. Schools will be randomly assigned within school districts to implement the reading or math treatment (pg. e64).

    The applicant expects that the participant sites will be similar on group characteristics because they will be from the same school districts (pg. e92). The applicant has an adequate plan to minimize overall attrition, including providing clear communication about data collection expectations to participants and school leaders (pgs. e94-95). They will also provide monetary incentives for survey participation (pg. e355). A sufficient approach was used to calculate effect size and estimate power for the analyses (pg. e125).

    Weaknesses:

    No weakness found.

    Reader's Score: 15

2. **(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

    Strengths:

    The applicant presents sufficient evidence that the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication in other settings. Their plan to produce guidance for implementing and scaling the project is to use a large sample that represents diverse settings and purposefully conduct differential impact analyses to learn if the program differently impacts some students and classrooms (pgs. e98-99). The evaluation plan will also focus on any issues with training, monitoring, and support, as well as examine discrepancies in fidelity of implementation (pg. e100). The applicant also shares results from their experience with replication in that their previous project implementation started in three states and is now in 12 states, and all demonstrating positive impact on school readiness (pg. e86).

    Weaknesses:

    No weakness found.

    Reader's Score: 5

Sub

3. **(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.**

Strengths:

The key project components, mediators, and outcomes are sufficiently described. The applicant proposes four project goals of which one is to develop school readiness. The related objectives are clearly aligned with the goal of school readiness; the objectives focus on engaging partners and recruiting participants, preparation steps for classroom implementation, and data analysis (pgs. e112-113). The applicant intends to examine mediating and moderating effects associated with project outcomes (pg. e117). For example, the research design includes assessing how student outcomes are mediated by parent or teacher engagement (pg. e95).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to present a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. As a result, it was unclear how the applicant would know if project implementation was satisfactory or not. Having a threshold for acceptable implementation later informs the process for sharing effective strategies for replication.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The evaluation methods are suitable to produce performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward project outcomes. To examine program impact, data will be collected from students using the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement on a range of subtests across language, literacy, and math domains. End of year ELA and math achievement scores on state assessments and district diagnostic assessments will also be used for the summative evaluation (pg. e64). The evaluation team will also collect implementation data such as online system records, parent and teacher survey responses, and interview responses. Those data will be analyzed and synthesized, and then presented in an annual report (pgs. e64, e124).

The applicant mentions that feedback opportunities were built into the management plan on an annual basis. Data that will be included in the continuous feedback system include training attendance, weekly usage, assessment data, and parent and teacher feedback (pg. e90). Completed fidelity checklists will also be reviewed (pg. e91). The management team will meet monthly via check-in calls, and two interim reporting events will occur during the grant cycle (pg. e124).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not have a fully developed plan to share feedback and progress toward outcomes throughout the project. For example, it was unclear what content would be shared during the management team's monthly check-in calls and if those calls would include discussions about performance feedback and progress toward outcomes. Also, the applicant does not provide details or demonstrate how data would be used throughout the year in their "continuous improvement feedback loop" (pg. e91).

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

  (a) **Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**
  (b) **Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**
  (c) **Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**
  (d) **Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

Strengths:

Not applicable.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 08:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)
Reader #6: **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	13
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	38
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	12
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	63
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	2
	Sub Total	5	2
	Total	105	65

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #6:   * * * * * * * * * *

Applicant: Waterford Institute Inc. (S411A230003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 13

    Sub

1. **The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant provides an adequate, but general description of the problems facing students in rural, underserved communities without describing in much detail the extent to which the proposed project will develop and demonstrate promising new strategies that build on or are alternatives to existing strategies. For instance, on p. e71 the applicant describes existing services and programs as both geographically and financially impractical for rural families. They base their statement on a broad survey of the region, without adequately aligning this population to the targeted population to be served. Nevertheless, the applicant's effort to address these issues are welcome as the activities proposed (particularly, early intervention) have evidence of effectiveness in addressing the needs of underserved students.

   Weaknesses:

   It is unclear to what extent the proposed project is based on prior or new strategies – only stating that strong randomized control trials provide evidence of efficacy for the cost-effective approach in rural communities. The applicant states on p. e71 that the project is supported by "strong" RCT evidence of efficacy and WWC recommendations for early literacy and math instruction. However, this is not further elaborated or supported by describing the prior research and how this project purports to build on or create an alternative to such work. Therefore, it remains unclear to what prior work this approach is connected to, and it is unclear with what level of fidelity the approach will be replicated or implemented.

   Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 38

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

    Strengths:

    The applicant adequately outlines specific strategies that overcome the barriers to scale found from prior attempts to scale. Specifically, the applicant outlines on pp. e81-e82 how they will address access and availability of services, keeping program costs low, addressing transportation issues, maintaining consistent performance fidelity, paying attention to parental preferences, and prioritizing rural children. For example, to address the barrier of access and availability of services (p. e81) the applicant proposes a program model that is flexible for setting in that there is no need for additional classroom space or physical location as the program is designed to be implemented at home, school or in hybrid spaces. Further, as discussed on pp. e81-e82 the model develops the skills of parents and primary caregivers so that parents are invested and there is no need to hire additional staff.

    Weaknesses:

    No weakness noted

    Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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.**

    Strengths:

    The applicant outlines a sufficient management plan beginning on p. e110 and provides enough detail to help understand the adequacy of the plan to achieve the proposed objectives. Four clearly articulated goals form the foundation of the management plan. The first goal aims to develop and expand the consortium of partners to advance early childhood education priorities across the region. The second goal aims to expand and implement the program model across the region to develop school readiness among rural, black, indigenous, people of color and high needs populations and develop evidence of effectiveness for local educational agencies and state agencies. The third goal aims to validate program effects for sustained gains by conducting an independent randomized control trial study. The fourth goal is to work with partners to disseminate findings broadly to promote adoption and replication in other rural, underserved communities. Each goal is supported by clear and measurable objectives, timelines and responsibilities, leading to confidence that the management plan can help meet objectives on time and on budget.

    Weaknesses:

    No weakness noted

    Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

    Strengths:

    The proposed program was first implemented as an at-home model but has evolved into a school-based model in the proposed iteration. The applicant details their plan to scale at a regional and eventually national level by partnering with regional and national organizations that have had prior success in bringing similar projects to scale. For example, on p. e84, the applicant explains that regular presentations to professional organizations such as the

American Education Research Association, National Rural Education Association, and National Association of Elementary School Principals, to name a few, typically helps them find additional partners to expand work to. Such a strategy that helps them share findings transparently to gain more participants lends a degree of trust in the applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale at a regional and/or national level.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's capacity in terms of scaling the roles of key project personnel is not clear. For example, the composition of personnel roles in the prior development phase of the project was not adequately described. Therefore, it is unclear how these potential differences in program staffing and personnel will impact the implementation of the proposed plan. Further discussion about how key personnel will lead to scaled implementation would help clarify the applicant's capacity to bring the proposed work to scale.

Reader's Score: 8

4. **(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes sufficient mechanisms to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development and/or replication including leveraging partnerships and relationships with elected officials to support implementation of project activities. The applicant explains beginning on p. e84 how they propose to use research information, responsive communities, policy information and partnerships among their strategies to broadly disseminate information about the project. For example, they will leverage their work with legislators in partnering states to help answer questions critical to decision makers such as: How does the program work? Why does it work? How much does it cost? Further, the applicant's marketing and public relations teams will work on an outreach campaign to increase media coverage and exposure across the regions served.

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted

Reader's Score: 10

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Strengths:

The applicant presents a feasible plan to make information resulting from the project available to a broad audience that may apply lessons learned in various ways. For example, the applicant's advocacy for universal access to early learning will be aided by working with rural, underserved communities to offer services that are not typically available to such communities. Their approach for working with responsive communities is adequately outlined on p. e84 and is a central feature of its outreach campaign. The applicant will leverage a large social media footprint with thousands of views and followers to help raise the profile of their program and the importance of early education to help other potential settings understand the benefits of implementing their program. This will have a positive effect on these communities and their likelihood to benefit from a program such as that proposed.

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted

Reader's Score: 5

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:**

Reader's Score: 12

   Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

    Strengths:

    The applicant sufficiently describes the conceptual framework behind the proposed project. The applicant on p. e88-e89 describes the implementation of the project's development phase and the learning opportunities that came from that experience and how those are being modified in the current expansion phase of the research. The proposed logic model on p. e325 provides sufficient detail of the conceptual framework and how each input and proposed program activities will lead to the planned/desired outputs.

    Weaknesses:

    No weakness noted

    Reader's Score: 5

2. **(2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

    Strengths:

    The applicant outlines beginning on p. e110 an implementation timeline table and identifies project phase, leaders (responsible parties), measures, goals & activities, and project outcomes. The table is detailed enough to provide an adequate sense of the timing, responsibility, and activities to be accomplished, with milestones and some measures of progress to look for.

    Weaknesses:

    The applicant does not adequately outline specific and measurable objectives for each proposed objective. For example, Objective 2-2 (p. e112) states program cohort implementations will be supported. This objective is neither specific or measurable and is therefore difficult to meaningfully assess.

    Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

    Strengths:

    The applicant, to some extent, describes a project design that is appropriate to and addresses the needs of the target population. The applicant makes a compelling argument based on their 2018 validation study (p. e77) for providing their services to rural, underserved areas of the south-eastern United States. The applicant proposes targeting Pre-K and K-3 students from rural, diverse and under-served communities to provide early reading and mathematics interventions that have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness in helping address the needs of the target population.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant's presentation of its project design does not provide a comprehensive or detailed description of the target population or their specifically identified needs. The applicant provides a general description of the target population stating they will serve Pre K-3 grade students from high-need, under-resourced communities but does not adequately describe this population in detail. For example, it is unclear how many students and from where participating students will be selected from – nor why they were selected as opposed to other students from similar backgrounds. It is difficult to ascertain, from the description provided, what the needs of the target students and educators are when the population has not been adequately described or demographics detailed.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

   Strengths:
   Not Applicable

   Weaknesses:
   Not Applicable

   Reader's Score: 0

2. **(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

   Strengths:
   Not Applicable

   Weaknesses:
   Not Applicable

   Reader's Score: 0

3. **(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.**

Sub

> **Strengths:**
>
> Not Applicable
>
> **Weaknesses:**
>
> Not Applicable

> **Reader's Score:** 0

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

> **Strengths:**
>
> Not Applicable
>
> **Weaknesses:**
>
> Not Applicable

> **Reader's Score:** 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

(a) **Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**
(b) **Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**
(c) **Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**
(d) **Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

Strengths:

The applicant states that they will initially partner with HBCUs Jackson State and Alcorn State Universities to leverage their educational expertise, community connections and commitment to serving diverse and marginalized communities. Two to four additional HBCUs will also serve on the proposed TASK force to help ensure their valuable input is integrated.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not adequately describe their own role in the proposed partnership with two HBCUS. It is unclear the role the applicant institution will play in relation to the role of the partner HBCU and how that they will implement the proposed project plan.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/14/2023 03:38 PM