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

**Applicant:** Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215J180069)

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

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### Priority Questions

**Competitive Preference Priority 1**

- Rural District-Small and Rural or Rural/Low-Income
  - 1. Rural District                  | 2  | 0  |
  **Sub Total**                        | 2  | 0  |

**Competitive Preference Priority 2**

- Broadly Representative Consortiums
  - 1. Consortiums                    | 1  | 1  |
  **Sub Total**                        | 1  | 1  |

**Competitive Preference Priority 3**

- History of Effectiveness
  - 1. Effectiveness                  | 1  | 1  |
  **Sub Total**                        | 1  | 1  |

**Total**                              | 104| 102|
Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - FSCS - 7: 84.215J

Reader #1:          **********
Applicant:         Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215J180069)

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—

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

   (2) 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:

   (1) The applicant clearly provides the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. MCSP will track the percentage of families and students targeted and receiving services during each program year. Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) Focus Services will be coordinated and implemented to meet the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the propose project. Foundational School and Community Services are in place and will and be looked to for partnerships, coordination, and support to meet the needs of targeted children and families in the community school. (p. 33-60)

   (2) The applicant's design of the proposed project is appropriate and will successfully address the needs of the target population or other identified needs. Marshall County reports the second highest rate of teen pregnancy in Iowa and an ongoing epidemic of methamphetamine use. While Marshall County’s 5.9% unemployment is relatively high compared to the state of Iowa’s 4.5%, most of the adult population is working. The district has a 67.2% eligibility rate for the federal free and reduced price lunch program. The elementary buildings they propose to serve have rates between 83.1% and 88.1%. (p.26)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader’s Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of project services, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following—

   (1) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

   (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.
Strengths:
(1) The applicant clearly provides the services to be provided by the proposed project for the intended recipients of those services and how they will be impactful for the project. The applicant has a decades-long history of collective impact projects made possible and successful to due agencies, civic groups, business, education, faith communities and many others’ willingness to share the work and the resources need to make change a reality in any number of quality-of-life areas. The high level of effective collaboration among Marshalltown’s institutions has also meant a low level of service duplication. The existing education related initiatives include Business Education Alliance, Marshalltown Education partnership, MEP, Healthy Students, Spread the Work-Read by Third (RB3rd), Marshalltown Project: Not in Our Town; and Reach Out and Read. Pipeline Services of the Marshalltown Community School Project noted that MCSP will focus its effort on the early years of student development by working with three elementary buildings. Collaboration with the community’s early care and education resources are key in helping every child be ready for school. For example, Transition to School Camp is a summer learning program designed to prepare children ages 4 and 5 to successfully enter school. (p.61)

(2) The applicant clearly provides an array of services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services. The network has a strong network of community organizations to provide the access to social, health, nutrition, and mental health services so often needed by limited income children and families. Ensuring the overall health and well-being of students is crucial to academic success, and only through engaging with community partners will a full range of service and supports be available to the project and the students it serves. (p.70-80)

Weaknesses:
None noted.

Reader’s Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

(1) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project;

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

Strengths:
(1) The applicant has clearly documented and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. The applicant stated that the Marshalltown Community School Project (MCSP) has adequate resources for success as a community school model, and has chosen to focus services on three schools eligible for school wide programs under section 1114(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. MICA and MCSD have partnered for years on projects serving limited income students in the district, particularly in the areas of school attendance, summer learning, and grade-level reading. MCSP comprises 22 active partners and the project leadership expects more organizations will join the project during the planning and initial implementation phase. (p.m 82-88)

(2) The applicant’s costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. For example, the Project Director will manage project goal completion and project evaluation, supervise staff. (3% FTE @ $36.75/hr with an anticipated 3% annual COLA). (p.89, Budget Narrative)
Weaknesses:
None noted.

Reader’s Score: 15

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—

(1) 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.

(2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant provided a comprehensive management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The MICA Board of Directors is made up of 1/3 persons with low-incomes, 1/3 private sector representatives, and 1/3 elected officials meets 10 times each year. Through those meetings and other related activities, they provide oversight of the operation of MICA and its programs. At every meeting, they will monitor the project budget and review dashboards depicting programmatic progress. At least once each year, and more often as warranted, they will receive an in-person report from the Project Director regarding the project’s progress, successes, and challenges. The evaluator’s annual reports will be provided for their review and feedback. The 25 member committee represents the Marshalltown Community School District (MCSD), the City of Marshalltown, MICA, Child Abuse Prevention, Adult Literacy, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Economic Development, Health, Education, Early Education, Philanthropy YMCA and Law Enforcement. Many of the committee members are project partners and have formalized their support for this project and application with letters of support. (p. 90-91)

(2) The applicant clearly demonstrates the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. The Project Director (30% FTE Year 1; 15% FTE Year 2-5) is responsible for the successful implementation of the project. The project director (MICA’s Family Development Director) will manage key partner and external stakeholder relationships (including ensuring steering committee involvement) as well as supervise the personnel coordinating and implementing the project. She will be responsible for the project meeting its established goals on time and within the project’s budget. She will supervise the Attendance and Transition Model Designer, FSCS Project Supervisor, and the Data Specialist. (Appendix A/Job Description and Resume, p.91)

Weaknesses:
None noted.

Reader’s Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

9/14/18 10:53 AM
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—

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant's methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. The applicant stated that they will assist staff to turn data into useful answers that help all students succeed. The project director and the data manager will have bi-weekly evaluation conversations. Together they will facilitate monthly conversations with the project team and the project evaluator. During these evaluation conversations, the project evaluator will present summary data to track progress over time for key measures. The evaluation director will help the project director and steering committee review and reflect on the data. The regular monitoring meetings are not about simply reporting data. Instead, they will help project staff and the steering committee understands the story behind the data so they can reflect on how well current strategies are working. Every monitoring meeting will end with clear action steps that call for adjusting current methods or implementing new activities. The External Evaluator has a Master's level social worker who has directed the evaluation of 28 projects funded by federal grant programs. The current MCSD student database (Infinite Campus) has been set up to provide administrators with access to important behavioral data for attendance, office referrals, suspensions, and calls to police as well as academic progress and outcomes for students. (p.53-56)

(2) The applicant clearly describes the methods of evaluation which include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible. The applicant stated that the evaluation design and plan will be finalized during the planning period at the beginning of the project (within the first quarter) and then updated annually. Data collection will begin immediately after the design is complete and will continue throughout the project. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected from students, parents, project staff, school staff, partner staff, and community members. The evaluation will provide aggregate level data for each of the measures listed in the evaluation plan. They will have the ability to disaggregate, analyze, and report data by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, grade level, attendance, school, and program. Data will be available to review for individual students, but will not be released at the student level in any public documents. Data will also be gathered through a review of project staff records and pre/post tests conducted in certain activities. The project evaluator will finalize data collection procedures and collection tools, and the data manager will develop a structured database for storing all measures that are not already a part of the existing databases. Initial data collection tools will be completed by the end of the first quarter. Additional tools will be developed as needed throughout the five-year project period. Surveys, interviews, and other process evaluation data will be analyzed by the project director and the data manager and reported in summary tables, graphics, and narrative form. (p.110-115)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Rural District-Small and Rural or Rural/Low-Income

1. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1

Rural District-Small and Rural or Rural and Low-Income:
The Secretary gives priority to applicants that include a LEA that is currently eligible under the Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program or the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program authorized under title V, part B (sections 5211 and 5221) of the ESEA.

Strengths:
The applicant does not address Competitive Preference Priority 1.

Weaknesses:
None noted.

Reader’s Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Broadly Representative Consortiums

1. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 2:

   Broadly Representative Consortiums:
   
The Secretary gives priority to an applicant that demonstrates that it is a consortium comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders.

   Strengths:
   The applicant clearly demonstrates eligibility that it is a consortium comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders. Marshalltown has a long history of effective collaboration to improve schools and neighborhoods dating back to the Caring Connection, a program that started in the 1980s. The applicant clearly demonstrates eligibility that it is a consortium comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders. Marshalltown has a long history of effective collaboration to improve school strategies to improve schools and neighborhoods, culminating with Marshalltown receiving one of 4 National Civic League All-America City Grade Level Reading Awards, the result of over 150 volunteers devoting over 750 hours to creating a plan to improve reading proficiency. The number of groups engaged in efforts to improve schools and neighborhoods has grown. One result of the increased number of planning groups and initiatives is the lack of formalized coordination of the various efforts that has led to some duplication of service as well as unaddressed gaps in service. The Marshalltown Community School Project has been designed to unite all of Marshalltown’s current efforts to improve schools and neighborhoods into a collaborative and comprehensive place-based approach in three elementary schools and will ultimately serve as a model for all of Marshalltown’s neighborhoods.

   Weaknesses:
   None noted.

Reader’s Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - History of Effectiveness

1. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 3:

   History of Effectiveness:
   
The Secretary gives priority to an applicant that demonstrates that it is a consortium with a history of effectiveness.
**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly demonstrates eligibility that it is a consortium with a history of effectiveness. Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA) the lead agency has a long and successful history of building community connection to advance programs, policies and budgets that improve the lives of Marshalltown children and their families. The history include the implementation of numerous national research projects that required the use of high-quality staff, the development of intricate data management systems, and the creation and maintenance of collaborative relationships across the community, state, and country. The programs included services that span the continuum. Four complex, research-rich programs worked directly in neighborhoods and with elementary schools.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score:** 1

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/01/2018 02:35 PM
## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (U215J180069)  
**Reader #2:** **********

| Questions | Selection Criteria | Quality of Project Design | 1. Project Design | 15 | 15  
|-----------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----|-----  
|           |                    | Quality of Project Services | 1. Project Services | 25 | 25  
|           |                    | Adequacy of Resources | 1. Adequacy of Resources | 15 | 15  
|           |                    | Quality of the Management Plan | 1. Management Plan | 20 | 20  
|           |                    | Quality of the Project Evaluation | 1. Project Evaluation | 25 | 25  

**Sub Total**

| Priority Questions | Competitive Preference Priority 1 | Rural District-Small and Rural or Rural/Low-Income | 1. Rural District | 2 | 0  
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----|-----  
|                   | Competitive Preference Priority 2 | Broadly Representative Consortiums | 1. Consortiums | 1 | 1  
|                   | Competitive Preference Priority 3 | History of Effectiveness | 1. Effectiveness | 1 | 1  

**Total**

| Status: Submitted | Last Updated: 09/01/2018 05:30 PM |
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—

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

   (2) 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:

(1) The applicant was thorough in outlining the objectives and activities and how these will be measured. A chart starting on page e50 describes the objectives that are aligned to the project goals, as well as the pipeline services that align to that objective and goal. In this chart, the applicant also references the lead entities that will provide that service along with partner entities. Later in the application, in the evaluation section, the applicant also includes a timeline to correspond to these aligned activities and objectives.

(2) On page e39, the applicant describes some of the common barriers that families face that were identified during one of three family focus groups it hosted. Included in the issues raised by families is that food costs are high, transportation is inaccessible, lack of affordable childcare, and affordable housing, among many others. The applicant aligned its programs and services as well as its project design to these expressed needs from the community.

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses found

(2) No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of project services, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following—

   (1) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

   (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.
Strengths:

1. On page e71, the applicant describes how the community school strategy and the current proposal would help it scale existing programs and services that have proven impactful. An example that is given is the Abriendo Puertas program to foster family engagement and empowerment. The applicant draws on an extensive field of research from authorities such as Attendance Works (page e77) to ensure it invests in impactful interventions.

2. On page e88, the applicant offers numerous examples of partnerships and collaborations that will ensure the impact of its services. The Ardent Wellness Center will partner to offer mental health services, and the Substance Abuse Treatment Unit of Central Iowa will offer life skills lessons. On page e91, the applicant describes that many of these partnerships are appropriate for the current proposal because many of the entities listed in the application have been collaborating since 2011. A chart on pages e67 and e71 also corroborates the appropriateness of the partners involved by describing the needs and target populations identified and then the specific organization or program, such as Bobcat University or Abriendo Puertas, which could strategically meet those needs.

3. The applicant describes measures to make the program accessible to even hard to reach populations. On page e81, the applicant describes door to door campaigns to reach families with children at risk of chronic absence. On page e87 the applicant describes one of its core programs -- Abriendo Puertas, as having a documented impact on supporting Mexican immigrant children and families.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses found

2. No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

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

   2. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

Strengths:

1. There is ample evidence of the commitment of partners to the project. On page e105, the applicant states that the coalition supporting the community schools initiative includes 22 active partners. All of the key partners have attached MOUs or letters of commitment to the application. This includes the YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Child Abuse Prevention Services, SATUCI, and many more.

2. The applicant clearly demonstrates the reasonableness and appropriateness of costs for the grant. On page e105, the applicant breaks down the number of students served in a variety of capacities. 600 students will be served by a transition to school camp, 524 families will be services through transition planning, 978 students will be served by Bobcat University, 1,163 parents will be served through Abriendo Puertas, and 833 others will be served through case management referrals, amongst other things. Overall, the annual cost of $500,000 is very reasonable for such a high return in terms of number of persons served.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses found

2. No weaknesses found
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—

   (1) 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.

   (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

(1) The management plan proposed by the applicant offers clear channels of oversight and accountability. It includes leveraging the MICA Board of Directors and developing a Steering Committee. On page e111, the applicant provides a chart clearly showing the project timeline and milestones that would allow for easy tracking of progress.

(2) On page e121, the applicant provides two organizational charts that describe the support structures around the project director and the capacity provided in the grant to carry out the grant mission. There is a project director and project supervisor provided appropriately in the grant, and job descriptions for key personnel are attached.

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses found

(2) No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 20

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—

   (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

   (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant offers a strong thoughtful evaluation system. There is a data manager provided in the grant, and there will be, according to page e127, biweekly evaluative conversations between the data manager and project director. At these meetings, the project evaluator will present summary data for tracking progress. The applicant has also named an external evaluator, Ron Mirr.

(2) The applicant provides evidence to signify that a wide range of indicators and evaluation methods will be utilized. Student level quantitative data will be collected along with qualitative perception data from stakeholders such as survey, interview, and focus group data. On page e133, the applicant outlines a comprehensive evaluation timeline that highlights the diverse means of data collection and sources of data.
Weaknesses:
(1) No weaknesses found
(2) No weaknesses found

Reader’s Score: 25

Priority Questions
Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Rural District-Small and Rural or Rural/Low-Income

1. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1

Rural District-Small and Rural or Rural and Low-Income:

The Secretary gives priority to applicants that include a LEA that is currently eligible under the Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program or the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program authorized under title V, part B (sections 5211 and 5221) of the ESEA.

Strengths:
None found

Weaknesses:
Applicant does not specifically address this competitive priority

Reader’s Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Broadly Representative Consortiums

1. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 2:

Broadly Representative Consortiums:

The Secretary gives priority to an applicant that demonstrates that it is a consortium comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders.

Strengths:
The applicant has a broad coalition assembled to support the work. Page e20 and e21 show the various entities and sectors represented in the coalition through membership of the steering committee. Included in the coalition is: Big Brothers Big Sisters, Vision Marshalltown, YMCA, City of Marshalltown, the Police, and many others.

Weaknesses:
None found

Reader’s Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - History of Effectiveness
1. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 3:

History of Effectiveness:

The Secretary gives priority to an applicant that demonstrates that it is a consortium with a history of effectiveness.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates through the discussion starting on page e24 that there has been a long history of success in achieving successful interagency collaborations. This includes national research projects requiring collaboration, and also a Head Start transition project called Taking Action for School Kids that extended Head Start supports “upward” through elementary school.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/01/2018 05:30 PM