

PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE: Instructions for Project Narrative

The project narrative is to be attached to the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in the application package in e-Application.

Before preparing the project narrative and responding to the requirements of the absolute priority, applicants should carefully review the Federal Register notice for specific guidance and requirements. Note that applications will be reviewed according to the specific selection criteria and the absolute priorities.

The project narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria included in the notice for Promise Neighborhoods (PNs). To facilitate the review of the application, we strongly recommend that you include a table of contents for the project narrative and address each of the selection criteria in the order in which they are described in Table 1 – Recommended Organization of Project Narrative. Following the selection criteria, you may address the invitational priority included in your proposal to plan.

Note: In addressing the selection criteria, the project narrative should also address the Absolute Priority 1 requirements (#1-#10) identified in Section I of the Federal Register within each selection criterion as mapped in Table 1 – Recommended Organization of Project Narrative.

Limit the project narrative to 40 pages, double-spaced, numbered consecutively. Charts, graphs, citations/references, or examples are included within the 40 pages. MOU’s are to be included in an appendix (not in the 40 pages).

Table 1. Recommended Organization of Project Narrative

Selection Criteria	Absolute Priority Requirement
Need for the project (up to 10 points)	1. Description of the neighborhood and level of distress
Quality of project design (up to 20 points)	2. Description of how the applicant will plan to build the continuum;
Quality of project services (up to 15 points)	8. Description of how the applicant will plan to use data; 9. Description of commitment to work with national evaluator; and 10. Description of indicators to be used for needs assessment
Quality of project personnel (up to 25 points)	3. Description of the applicant’s organizational capacity to plan and implement a Promise Neighborhood
Quality of management plan (up to 20 points)	4. Description of how the applicant will plan to sustain and “scale up” the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and 5. Description of commitment the applicant anticipates receiving from partners, including Memorandum of Understanding ¹ described in paragraph 5(a) of Absolute Priority 1
Significance (up to 10 points)	6. Description of how the applicant will plan to track available sources and funding levels of Federal, State, and local funds that could be utilized in the project; and 7. Description of how the applicant will identify Federal, State, or local policies, regulations, or other requirements that would impede the applicant in achieving its goals

Invitational Priority

Unique Learning Needs, Quality Internet Connectivity, Civic Engagement, or Arts and Humanities

I. Need for the Project (10 points, ~4 pages double-spaced)

Priority requirement:

1. Description of the neighborhood and level of distress

Evaluation criteria include the following:

- i) The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators;
- ii) The extent to which the geographically defined area is described; and
- iii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities are identified and addressed by the proposed project

To Do:

1. Confirm that your Neighborhood is eligible
 - a. One criterion is: All or a portion of the neighborhood includes or is within the attendance zone of a low-performing school that is a high school, especially one in which the graduation rate is less than 60 percent or a school that can be characterized as low-performing based on another proxy indicator, such as students' on-time progression from grade to grade; and
 - b. Other indicators, such as significant achievement gaps between subgroups of students within a school or LEA, high teacher and principal turnover, or high student absenteeism
2. Gather all of the data needed to document need.
 - a. Immunization rates, rates of crime (including violent crime) student mobility rates, teen birth rates, % children in single-parent or no-parent families, rates of vacant or substandard homes (including distressed public and assisted housing), % residents living at or below a Federal poverty threshold.
3. Need a list of each indicator and where you are getting it

II. Project Design (20 points, ~ 8 pages)

Priority requirements:

Q2. Description of how the applicant will plan to build the continuum (of evidence-based interventions);

See slides 28-32 of May 5&10 webinar

Q8. Description of how the applicant will plan to use data;

See slide 39 of May 5&10 webinar

Q9. Description of commitment to work with national evaluator;

See slide 40 of May 5&10 webinar

Q10. Description of indicators to be used for needs assessment

See slides 41-44 of May 5&10 webinar

Review criteria include:

- (i) (Q2) Describe your plan to build a continuum of solutions designed to significantly improve the academic and family and community support indicators in this notice;
 - a. Agree on the continuum of solutions.
 - b. Clarify precisely what is going to be done in the planning year with these services (provide them on a limited basis? Pilot some of them? Train people in their use?) Document the extent of their current availability and quality.
 - c. Get MOU's from any entity that will provide on of the services or will get trained in its use. I possible, get the cooperation of the state and county agencies that have formal responsibility around child abuse, OHP, welfare, etc. In some cases, you may want to seek systems change—not in the first year, but you might propose aiming for it.
- (ii) (Q2) Describe how the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
- (iii) (Q8) Describe strategies for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;
- (iv) (Q10) Identify and describe academic and family and community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;
 - a. Agree on the indicators, the measures to be used to get them, and the procedures for collecting data.
- (v) (Q9) Demonstrate a commitment to work with the Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees; and
- (vi) Describe how the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

III. Project Services (15 points, ~6 pages)

See slides 57&58 from May 5&10 webinar

Priority requirements:

- Q2. Description of how the applicant will plan to build the continuum;
See slide 33 of May 5 & 10 webinar
- Q8. Description of how the applicant will plan to use data;
- Q9. Description of commitment to work with national evaluator; and
- Q10. Description of indicators to be used for needs assessment

Review criteria include:

- (i) Describe proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence;
- (ii) Describe the likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards; and
 - a. See slide 59 of May 5&10 webinar
- (iii) Explain how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.
 - a. Need to define what further actions will occur, when you contact a family and what the criteria will be for taking any action. You might provide: Brief supportive feedback? Referral? More intensive intervention?

IV. Project Personnel (25 points, ~10 pages)

Note that this section is worth more points than any other!

Priority requirement:

Q3. Description of the applicant's organizational capacity to plan and implement a Promise Neighborhood

a. See slide 34 from May 5&10 webinar

Review criteria include:

b) Describe/document project personnel qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the applicant, including the project director, and the prior performance of the applicant on efforts similar or related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

i. Determine who will be the Project Director?

b) Relevant experience includes the applicant's experience in and lessons learned by—

(i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Priority 1;

(ii) Serving the neighborhood and its residents;

(iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;

(iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to achieve results; and

(v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

i. Note that full resumes can be provided in an Appendix

V. Management Plan (20 points, ~ 8 pages)

Priority requirements:

Q4. Description of how the applicant will plan to sustain and “scale up” the proposed Promise Neighborhood;

See slide 35 of May 5&10 webinar

Q5. Description of commitment the applicant anticipates receiving from partners, including the preliminary memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5(a)

b. See slides 36 & 37 of May 5&10 webinar

Evaluation criteria include:

- (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;
 - a. Create a timeline, organizational chart, and define milestones. How will all this be coordinated? Who is doing what?
 - b. Need a list of each participating organization and the things they are going to do.
- (ii) The extent to which the memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5 of Absolute Priority 1 describes each partner’s financial and programmatic commitment; how each partner’s existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and existing activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and the governance structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood;
 - a. Tentatively agree on the continuum of solutions, identify what each participating organization is going to do and negotiate the MOU with that organization.
- (iii) How you will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of families, school staff, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and
- (iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain and “scale up” the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

VI. Significance (10 points, ~4 pages)

Even though this section is last and worth the least points, take care to not short shrift it!

Priority requirements:

Q6. Description of how the applicant will plan to track available sources and funding levels of Federal, State, and local funds that could be utilized in the project; and

Q7. Description of how the applicant will identify Federal, State, or local policies, regulations, or other requirements that would impede the applicant in achieving its goals

We think the feds want you to build towards and demonstrate sustainability and impact both fiscally (Q6) and at the policy (Q7) level writ large.

Evaluation criteria include the following:

- (i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change or improvement;
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population;
- (iii) 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; and
- (iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.