PROMISE NEIGHBORHOODS INSTITUTE

AT POLICYLINK

HOW TO APPLY:
The Promise Neighborhoods Grant-writing Guide

The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink is pleased to provide this *How to Apply: The Promise Neighborhoods Grant-writing Guide* for the U.S. Department of Education's new **Promise Neighborhoods** grants initiative. This guide is designed to help applicant organizations and neighborhood coalitions navigate through the guidelines and application for the 2010 **Promise Neighborhoods** planning grant and understand the key elements, priorities, and requirements of this funding opportunity.

In the following sections, we will lead you through the application process, give you tips and pointers on preparing the application, and connect you to resources to help you design an effective project and strong proposal. Let's get started…

First, let's take a look at what you can expect as we move through the application process. We have divided the process into five sequential steps. Click on the *green* or *blue* text to jump to the link or text within the section.

A. *BEFORE YOU START:*

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A. BEFORE YOU START:

The three things that all prospective applicants need to ask themselves before they delve into the details of the application requirements are:

1. **Are we *eligible*?**

2. **What's the *timeline*?**

3. **What's the *matching funds requirement*?**

Once you have reviewed the requirements in these three areas, you will be able to answer the most important question: Are we ***ready to apply***?

Confirming Eligibility:

Before you go any further, you need to check your eligibility for this grant competition. Here are the eligibility requirements from the U.S. Department of Education's *At-A-Glance* document for the 2010 Promise Neighborhoods grant competition:

*   **Eligibility Requirements.** Entities eligible to receive Promise Neighborhoods planning grants include: (1) nonprofit organizations, which may include faith-based nonprofit organizations, and (2) institutions of higher education. An eligible entity must also:

    o Operate a school; or partner with at least one school in the geographic area proposed to be served in coordination with the school's local educational agency (LEA);

    o Focus on a neighborhood in which there are multiple signs of distress based on indicators of need;

    o Currently provide at least one of the solutions from the applicant's proposed continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions in the neighborhood proposed to be served;

    o Be representative of the neighborhood proposed to be served;

    o If applying under Absolute Priority 3, be an eligible entity that partners with an Indian Tribe, or be an Indian Tribe that meets the definition of an eligible entity.

To be absolutely sure that you qualify, please review the following Eligibility Checklist, prepared by the Department of Education, which you will be required to submit as part of your proposal package. (Note: If you are not eligible to apply, you may consider partnering with an eligible entity. It would then serve as the lead agency for the application.)

Applicant Eligibility Checklist (required)
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **An eligible applicant must meet all requirements of (1) through (4) below.**

2. **A newly created entity must also fulfill requirement (5).**

3. **Applicants should check the appropriate boxes, save this document in MS Word, and upload it as Appendix A in E-Application.**

(1)	Click to check ONE box EACH for I and II below. **I. *The organization must fall under one of these two categories:*** ❑ A nonprofit organization that meets the definition of a nonprofit under 34 CFR 77.1(c), which may include a faith-based nonprofit organization **OR** ❑ An institution of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended **II. *At least one-third of the governing board or advisory board must be made up of either:*** ❑ Residents who live in the geographic area proposed to be served **OR** ❑ Residents of the city or county who are low-income (which means earning less than 80 percent of the area's median income) **OR** ❑ Public officials who serve the geographic area proposed to be served **OR** ❑ Some combination of individuals from these three groups
(2)	❑ **No more than one-half of the governing or advisory board may be made up of public officials**
(3)	❑ **The eligible applicant must operate or partner with at least one school in a geographic area proposed to be served in coordination with the school's local education agency (LEA).**
(4)	❑ **The applicant currently provides at least one of the solutions from the applicant's continuum of solutions in the geographic area proposed to be served.**
(5)	*******This box only applies to newly created eligible entities:* **Newly created entities must describe in their applications each of the following** (both must be checked): ❑ Meet all requirements of (1) – (4) above. **AND** ❑ The application includes a description of the prior performance of organizations managed by the new eligible entity's management team on efforts similar or related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Now that you have confirmed your eligibility, you need to look at key dates in the application process and take a look at the timeline for preparing the application for submission by the designated deadline.

Application Deadlines:

Intent to Apply Due: Friday, May 21, 2010
Submitting the Intent to Apply is strongly encouraged, but not required. Here are the instructions for how to complete the Intent to Apply form:

1. **Download the *Intent to Apply form***

2. **Fill out the form fields in the MS Word document**

3. **Save the form in MS Word**

4. **Email as an attachment to *pnintent@ed.gov***

Grant Applications Due: Monday, June 28, 2010
Applications must be submitted electronically via the Department of Education's e-Grants *website* by 4:30 p.m. ET/ 1:30 p.m. PT on Monday, June 28, 2010. The CFDA Number is 84.215P.

We **strongly recommend you submit early**, as in previous competitions, the e-Grants system has often been overloaded on the day of the submission deadline. (See the ***Application Guidelines***, pages 57-58, or the ***Understanding the Electronic Application*** section of this *How to Apply Guide* for explicit instructions about how to register with and submit grants through the e-Grants system.)

Applications will be reviewed during the Summer 2010 and grant awards announced in September 2010.

The designated grant period will be September 2010-September 2011.

Timeline for Submission:

As you can see, there is a **very tight turnaround time** for submission of your application. To be successful, we urge you to create a project timeline now, working backward from the deadline date of June 28, and outlining the steps you need to take and the dates that each of these steps needs to be completed. Things to take into consideration when creating your project timeline:

- Plan to submit your application **two to three days early**—or sooner—to allow time to upload files through the electronic application system and deal with any technical difficulties that may arise;

- Take into account you will have to get **approvals** from **all participating schools, school districts,** and **institutions of higher education**. Some nonprofits also require **board approval** for grant submissions. Find out now what the deadlines and timelines are for your own organization and your partner institutions;

- May and June mark the end of the **school year or semester** for most educational institutions. This means that most administrators and faculty are extremely busy and some may be taking off for a long Memorial Day weekend or leaving for summer vacation. Act now to get input and buy-in on your proposal as well as the necessary approvals and signatures from all parties;

- Finally, you will be required to submit detailed **Memorandums of Understanding** (MOUs) from all partners. Note: The Department of Education is very specific about what it wants to see in the MOUs, (see ***Requirement 5 under Absolute Priority 1 in the Application Guidelines***, p. 11), so please follow the specifications in the guidelines.

- If you have not already done so, identify your key project partners this week and begin working with them to draft the MOUs as soon as possible. Note: Drafting MOUs has value beyond meeting the technical requirements of the application; MOUs can be used as a planning tool. They help you plan, clarify each partner's contribution, share and align theories of change, and decide upon an appropriate governance structure for the project. Remember: This is a preliminary MOU only—an agreement to work on a plan for various solutions. In the case of certain required activities, such as school reform, the Department of Education understands that securing agreement to actually "implement" a plan may take much longer and involve getting union approval, resolving personnel and legal issues, etc. This will be part of what the planning grant team will work on during the planning grant process.

- Once the contents of the MOUs are approved, assign one or two individuals to "walk-through" the letters and get them signed so that you can make sure to have them well in advance of the deadline date.

Understanding the Matching Requirement:

Most federal grants have a matching requirement, asking the lead agency and project partners to demonstrate their commitment to the project through financial contributions and in-kind donations.

To help you understand the specific matching requirement for the 2010 Promise Neighborhoods planning grant, the Department of Education has prepared the following summary.

Promise Neighborhoods Planning Grants
Understanding the Promise Neighborhoods Matching Requirement

This note summarizes information regarding the Promise Neighborhoods matching requirement. Please note that all of the information provided herein has been previously provided in other publicly available documents.

Details of the Promise Neighborhoods Matching Requirement

An eligible applicant must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations, from one or more entities in the public or private sector, equal to a certain percentage of the grant award as described in Table 1:

Table 1: Matching Requirements according to Absolute Priority

Absolute Priority of Applicant	Matching Requirement
Absolute Priority 1: Proposal to develop a Promise Neighborhood Plan	At least **50 percent** of its grant award.
Absolute Priority 2: Promise Neighborhoods in Rural Communities	At least **25 percent** of the grant award.
Absolute Priority 3: Promise Neighborhoods in Tribal Communities	At least **25 percent** of the grant award.

- **Federal funds do NOT count** towards the matching requirement for planning grants. Other public funds and funds from private entities (which may include philanthropic organizations) do count.

- Contributions may be *cash or in-kind*. The Department's regulations on matching funds, including in-kind contributions, are set forth in 34 CFR 74.23.

- Eligible applicants may count **existing support** towards the required match so long as these funds or in-kind contributions are **reallocated in support of the proposed project**, and the applicant submits appropriate evidence of this commitment

Demonstrating the Match Commitment

Each applicant must demonstrate the commitment of matching funds by including letters in its application explaining the source of the contribution, the type and quantity of the match commitment, and original signatures from the executives of organizations or agencies providing the match. In the case of a third-party in-kind contribution, the applicant must include a description of how the value was determined for the donated or contributed goods or service.

Exceptions

The Secretary of Education may consider decreasing the matching requirement in the most exceptional circumstances, on a case-by-case basis. An applicant that is unable to meet the matching requirement must include in its application a request to the Secretary to reduce the matching level requirement, including the amount of the requested reduction and a statement of the basis for the request.

Regulations

An applicant should review the Department's cost-sharing and cost-matching regulations, which include specific limitations in 34 CFR 74.23 applicable to non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education and 34 CFR 80.24 applicable to State, local, and Indian tribal governments, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles for entity types regarding donations, capital assets, depreciations and allowable costs. These circulars are available on OMB's *website*.

Assessing Institutional Readiness to Apply

If you are not ready to apply for a **Promise Neighborhoods** planning grant at this time but are still interested in bringing such a program to your neighborhood in the future, there are two steps you can take to stay involved and get prepared for future competitions:

1. Consider becoming a peer reviewer; and

2. Use the application guidelines as a blueprint for conducting a neighborhood/regional planning process that would position you to apply for a **Promise Neighborhoods** implementation grants in the future. (Note: You would need to absorb the costs or find funding for the planning process on your own).

Information on Becoming a Peer Reviewer:

Application to be a Peer Reviewer Due: Tuesday, June 1, 2010
Not applying for a **Promise Neighborhoods** planning grant? Serve as a *peer reviewer*.

The Department of Education is looking for peer reviewers from various backgrounds and professions, with expertise in areas such as education reform and policy, community and youth development, strategy, and grant application review. Here are the instructions for how to apply to be a peer reviewer:

1. Fill out the *Peer Reviewer Checklist***.**

2. Save it to your computer as a 1997-2003 Microsoft Word document (.doc, not .docx) with your

full name/peer reviewer checklist as the title of the document (e.g. "John Smith peer reviewer checklist").

3. Email the p eer reviewer checklist with your resume and a one-page cover letter summarizing your experience and interests to *pnpeerreview@ed.gov* before **Tuesday, June 1, 2010.**

Information on Future Promise Neighborhoods Grant Competitions:

In subsequent years, depending on available funding, the Department of Education intends to hold competitions for **new planning grants**. If your Promise Neighborhood concept is still in the very formative stages, you may want to consider waiting until the next planning grant competition and preparing yourself to apply then.

The Department of Education also intends to conduct competitions for implementation grants, probably starting in Spring 2011. All eligible entities will be able to apply for an implementation grant. Those eligible entities that secure a 2010 planning grant will, of course, be well positioned to apply for an implementation grant, as that is the purpose of the planning grant. **You do not, however, have to have had a planning grant in order to apply for an implementation grant.** Eligible entities that do not apply for or are not awarded a planning grant but spend the next year carrying out the activities outlined in the planning grant notice should also be in a strong position to apply. This is another option for your group to consider.

B. BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Understanding the Electronic Application Process:

Take the time now to familiarize with the Department of Education's e-Grants electronic submissions system. You can find detailed instructions in the *Application Guidelines* on pages 57-58. You should also visit the e-Grants *website* right away and get registered.

Key things you need to know:

- For this competition, all applicants are required to submit their application electronically through the Department of Education's e-Grants system. (Please see the *application instructions* regarding submitting your application by mail if your organization does not have the technological capacity to submit electronically.)

- Check with the e-Grants *website* to see if you have the right systems on your computer to process the application.

- You must *register* in order to use the e-Grants system and complete and submit the application.

- You must complete the electronic forms online and upload all the other documents (i.e., the Abstract, the Narrative, and various attachments) to the *electronic application*. Please note: the instructions require you to **upload all of the attachments**—including the MOUs and resumes—**in one document**. (Note: This adds another step to your organizational process, as you must have all the signatures and documents in hand before you can upload, rather than uploading each item separately as soon as you receive it. This is yet another reason to get those MOUs and other vital documents as soon as possible.)

- You will need an **authorized representative** from within your organization to approve the submission of the grant and sign off on the required forms. Check within your organization to determine the appropriate authorized representative for your entity. (Note: Within nonprofit organizations, this is often the board president, as the board must approve grant submissions.)
  - o Whoever it is, you **MUST BE ABLE TO GET THE AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE'S SIGNATURE BETWEEN JUNE 25 AND JUNE 28** in order to fax the signed cover form as required (see below).

- After you submit the application electronically, you **MUST FAX YOUR SIGNED SF 424 COVER PAGE** to the Department of Education within three days of submitting your application.

- You are strongly encouraged to **submit early** to allow adequate time for uploading documents and dealing with technical difficulties and systems overload, for example, from too many people submitting applications at once on the deadline day. TIP: Some experienced grant writers have actually set the alarm for **3 A.M.** and tried uploading then, when e-traffic is less intense!

E-Application Support:

For technical support contact the Helpdesk at 1-888-336-8930
(TTY: 1-866-697-2696, local 202-401-8363).

Hours of operation: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time (ET), Monday-Friday

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C. GETTING STARTED

Orientation Materials:
Start by using the following orientation materials from the U.S. Department of Education to give you an overview of the application. We recommend that you look at the summary materials and review the webinar power point presentations before diving into the application materials.

Summary Materials:
- **At-A-Glance** Download this helpful two-page overview of the program summarizing the purpose, eligibility, matching requirements, and priorities.

- Revised on June 22, 2010, download the complete **Promise Neighborhoods Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** document. If you want to download the individual addendums, **click here** to visit the U.S. Department of Education webpage on Promise Neighborhoods.

- These documents offers responses to questions about eligibility, priorities, target populations, the service area, project design, data collection and reporting, and allowable activities during the planning period. (Please note: The Department of Education will update their FAQs regularly to reflect common questions they are receiving, so please check the website for updates.)

- **Conference Call Information for Tribal Leaders**

Pre-Application Webinars:
Pre-application webinars were designed to provide technical assistance to interested applicants for Promise Neighborhoods.

- Monday, May 3, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET (Program overview only)
Recorded Program Overview Webinar

- Wednesday, May 5, 1:00-5:00 p.m. ET
Recorded Pre-Application Webinar

- Monday, May 10, 12:00-4:00 p.m. ET
Recorded Pre-Application Webinar

- Pre-Application Webinar Slides **(MS PowerPoint|PDF)**

- *(Please note: The same PowerPoint presentation is used for the webinars on May 5 and May 10. However, each webinar had a unique Question and Answer period.)*

Application Materials:
Next, set aside time to carefully review the *Federal Register* announcement and *Application Guidelines* listed below and begin to become familiar with the terms in the *Planning Grants Glossary*. We recommend that you have at least two people review the application materials simultaneously, so that you can support each other in understanding the guidelines and making sure that you cover all the requirements of the grant. Gather the materials in a binder and use page dividers and tabs so that you can easily refer to specific sections as needed during grant team meetings.

Federal Register Notice Inviting Applications for Fiscal Year 2010
Download the official notice posted on the Federal Register. Please refer to the *Federal Register page* for any updates or new announcements.

Application Package

The Promise Neighborhoods application package is to be used as a guide only; while the *Application Guidelines* contain much of the same content as the *Federal Register* notice, the *Federal Register* is considered the official notice and should be considered the official statement of requirements. For clarification and technical questions, please contact the Department of Education.

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Planning Grants Glossary

What are the "indicators of need?" What does the Department of Education mean by "moderate evidence?" Download this glossary of official definitions of terms used in the federal application.

D. MOVING FORWARD

This section contains the following:

Understanding the Components of the Application Package
Application Checklist
A "Walk-Through" of the Project Narrative

Understanding the Components of the Application Package:

The *2010 Promise Neighborhoods application* has three main parts:

- Application Narratives: This consists of a 1-page Abstract, a 40-page Project Narrative (page limit strongly recommended, but not required as amended by the U.S. Department of Education on June 22, 2010), a Budget Narrative form, and an Appendix including items such as resumes, a 10-page MOU (page limit strongly recommended, but not required as amended by the U.S. Department of Education on June 22, 2010), 501(c)(3) form, etc.

- Standard Forms: This includes the standard cover form, supplemental information form, and budget form required for federal grants.

- Assurances and Certifications: Required certifications and assurances for federal grants.

In addition, please read the notice about the GEPA statement in the back of the *Application Guidelines*.

All applicants must address the non-discrimination policies outlined in the GEPA statement within the project activities outlined in their proposal and state how the applicant institution meets the GEPA statement within the Project Narrative.

The following application checklist, prepared by the Department of Education for this grant opportunity, is a useful tool in helping you to plan your proposal package and double check that you have all of the pieces in place before submitting the final application.

TIPS AND STRATEGIES:
- Have several people on your team review the checklist and guidelines to make sure that you have not missed some important piece of information;

- Read all materials **at least three times**. Highlight important information. Place in a project binder with tabs and page dividers for easy referral during the planning process;

- **Write the Abstract last**. This is because a lot of planning takes place during the course of preparing a proposal and you want the abstract to summarize the final version, not your initial vision for the project;

- Finally—and this is common sense but far too often overlooked—make sure that the **different sections of the application package match**. Too often sections are done at different times in the proposal's evolution and are not updated to reflect the latest thinking as planning evolves, or they contain contradictory statements. Items referred to in the narrative do not show up in the budget or personnel sections. Keep checking back and forth between sections during the application preparation process and make this a priority for your in-house reviewers when you double check the application in its final stages, before application.

Application Checklist

Use This Checklist While Preparing Your Application Package:
NOTE: You do not have to include this checklist in your application package. However, all of the items listed on this checklist are required to appear in your application package.

Application Narratives

- ❑ Abstract Narrative (use the ED Abstract Form)
- ❑ Project Narrative (use the Project Narrative Attachment Form)
- ❑ Budget Narrative (use Budget Narrative Attachment Form)
- ❑ Appendix
  - ❑ Applicant Eligibility Checklist (available on Department Website)
  - ❑ Resumes of Key Personnel
  - ❑ Memorandum of Understanding
  - ❑ Documentation of match **or** waiver request for match, if applicable
  - ❑ Nonprofit status verification, if applicable
  - ❑ Other, if applicable

Standard Forms

- ❑ Application for Federal Assistance - (SF 424)
- ❑ Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424
- ❑ ED Budget Form SF 524

Assurances and Certifications

- ❑ Certification Regarding Lobbying
- ❑ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- ❑ Survey Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Applicants
- ❑ Assurances - Non-Construction Programs

A "Walk-Through" of the Project Narrative:

Quick Review of Page Limit and Formatting Requirements:

Before you begin planning out and writing your project narrative, it is important to review the page limit and formatting requirements set forth on page 23 of the **_Application Guidelines_**, as this will tell you how much room you have to present the required information. Here is a recap of the main points:

- The Project Narrative has a 40-page limit. Revised on June 22, 2010 the U.S. Department of Education states that the 40-page limit for the project narrative strongly encouraged, but not required. Please note: The Abstract and the Budget Narrative sections are not included in this 40-page count.

- The Department of Education strongly recommends that you include a **Table of Contents** within the 40-page Project Narrative in order to make it easy for the peer reviewers to check the content of your application. This means that you really have only 39 pages for narrative text.

- Two other factors will have a major impact on the amount of information you can include in your narrative text: spacing requirements and font size.

  o All text must be **double-spaced, even within charts, tables, figures, graphs, titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, captions, and references**.

  o All text must be **12 pt. regular** (not narrow—see Application Guidelines for allowable fonts), **even within charts, tables, graphs, quotations, and captions**.

- Use 1" margins on all four sides of the page.

- Use 12-pt font, single-spacing, and 1" margins in preparing the 1-page Abstract, as well.

- Finally, if you have received a waiver and will be submitting your application by mail, remember to print on only one side of the page; do not double-side your text.

Overview of the Project Narrative:

The Project Narrative consists of **six** separate but interrelated **sections**. Each section is assigned a certain value, in terms of points, with all points adding up to a total possible score of 100.

PROJECT NARRATIVE SECTIONS	POINTS PER SECTION
Need for the Project	10 points
Quality of Project Design	20 points
Quality of Project Services	15 points
Quality of Project Personnel	25 points
Quality of the Management Plan	20 point
Significance	10 points

As you can see, the bulk of the points—45 points total—are in sections 4 and 5, which deal with the quality of project personnel and the quality of the project management plan. This is because the Department of Education expects that applicants will be at varying levels of readiness to plan and implement such a major project. The Department wants to make sure that you have people with the experience and track record to successfully manage and complete the project. For this reason, you must have a strong team in place, with experienced staff and a governance structure that is representative of the target neighborhood or region and includes civic and government leaders.

(Note: According to the Department of Education, you can use your organization's board as the governance structure or create a separate project advisory council; the main issue is that the composition of the board or the council must meet the requirements outlined in the *Eligibility Checklist*.)

Review of the Absolute Priorities Required for the Proposal:

The Project Narrative must incorporate and respond to the Absolute Priorities established for the project. The Department of Education has established three Absolute Priorities and an Invitational Priority for this grant competition. These are:

1. Absolute Priority 1—Describe Proposal to Plan

2. Absolute Priority 2—Rural Communities

3. Absolute Priority 3—Tribal Communities

4. Invitational Priority—Applications that address one of the following four areas: Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Students with Limited English Proficiency; Internet Connectivity; Civic Engagement; and Arts and Humanities. (Note: Applicants will not be given preference if they choose to address an Invitational Priority in addition to an Absolute Priority.)

All applicants must select **one** of the Absolute Priorities as the focus of their proposal and state this clearly in their application.

All applicants, **even those that choose Absolute Priority 2 or 3, must address Absolute Priority 1**, which outlines what the federal government wants to see in your planning grant — your plan of how your will spend the next year planning a major multi-year project that will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of all children in the target neighborhood or region and, ultimately, transform that community.

(Note: You are not required to choose an Invitational Priority, and you will not get extra points for doing so. However, it can help to make a strong application. If you already have initiatives in place to serve the populations targeted in the Invitational Priority or relevant projects or partnerships, then consider addressing the Invitational as part of your project.)

Relationship of the Project Narrative to the Absolute Priorities:

Because the **Promise Neighborhoods** initiative is an ambitious endeavor and aims to see changes in both the area of direct services and programs and the area of policies and systems, the Department of Education is very specific in Absolute Priority 1 about the types of schools, school reform changes, programs, services, and activities that it will fund through the project.

There are 10 requirements listed under Absolute Priority 1, which must be addressed within your proposal. (Note: These requirements are described in detail the *Application Guidelines* (pages 8-14).

To assist applicants in addressing these specifications, the Department of Education has provided a handy **chart** describing the relationship of each of the **10 requirements** listed under Absolute Priority 1 to the six required sections of the proposal. In other words, the Department tells you which of the requirements to address in each of the six sections. (Note: The guidelines also say that it may also be appropriate for an applicant to address a requirement under more than one section.)

It is highly recommended that you **USE THIS CHART TO STRUCTURE YOUR PROPOSAL, in order to make sure you address the key elements required in the guidelines.**

Here is a copy of that chart for your reference:

Table 3. Recommended Organization of Project Narrative

SECTION	RELATED ABSOLUTE PRIORITY ONE REQUIREMENT(S)
Section 1: Need for Project	1. **Description of the neighborhood and level of distress**
Section 2: Quality of Project Design	2. **Description of how the applicant will plan to build the continuum;** 8. **Description of how the applicant will plan to use data;**
Section 3: Quality of Project Services	9. **Description of commitment to work with national evaluator; and** 10. **Description of indicators to be used for needs assessment**
Section 4: Quality of Project Personnel	3. **Description of the applicant's organizational capacity to plan and implement a Promise Neighborhood**
Section 5: Quality of Management Plan	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 the preliminary memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5(a)**
Section 7: Significance	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**

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE *APPLICATION GUIDELINES*: "To facilitate the review of the application, the Department strongly recommends that applicants include a table of contents for their project narrative and **address each of the selection criteria and priorities from Absolute Priority 1 *in the order in which they are described in Table 3***. After addressing the selection criteria, applicants may address the invitational priority included in the proposal to plan."

Proposal Planning Pointers:

In addition to organizing the proposal according to the recommended format and order listed in Table 3, here are some other suggestions for planning your proposal:

• Think like a peer reviewer. Review the Selection Criteria section of the ***Application Guidelines*** (pages 27-29), which outlines what the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in your proposal, and **organize your narrative to address the selection criteria**. Where appropriate, you might even use some of the wording from the Selection Criteria in your sub-headings, to make it easy for the reviewers to see that you have covered the necessary points.

- Continue to review the **_requirements_** described in pages 8-14 under Absolute Priority I to make sure that your proposed solutions incorporate and are in alignment with these requirements.

- Keep a copy of the **_Planning Grant Glossary_** by your side to refer to when outlining the different sections, so you can make sure you understand exactly what they mean by the various terms listed in the requirements.

- Ask a colleague to serve as an "outside reader" for the project, to double-check that you have adequately addressed the requirements for each section and make sure that your proposal is clearly organized and easy for the reviewers to understand.

Writing Tips:

- Write clearly and concisely: Remember, you have a very limited amount of space in which to cover a lot of material.

- Be precise and specific: Your proposal should function as a blueprint for action, which any colleague could then take and carry out if your project received funding tomorrow.

- Keep your audience in mind. According to the call for peer reviewers, the Department of Education is expecting reviewers from a number of different fields, including education (K-16), health, social services, research, and community development. These individuals may not be familiar with the terms and issues in your particular field so avoid jargon and make sure you explain technical terminology and references.

- Absorb the language of the funder. As you go through the application materials, make a running list of commonly used terms and phrases and consider how you might effectively use these in your proposal. Funding agencies are like people—you want to "speak their language" enough that they can "hear" you, while at the same time being true to yourself.

- Try to have one main writer or point person for the proposal, to ensure consistency of tone and style and information.

- Make sure all your narrative sections are interlinked, in that they refer back to one another and do not contradict each other. Also, make sure that the narrative activities and personnel listed are reflected in the budget.

- Check your spelling and grammar and always have several parties, including individuals outside of the project, proofread each section for clarity, spelling and grammatical errors, and other formatting mistakes. Remember, the reviewers will be looking at a number of applications at one time and, as with student papers, those who "did their homework" will stand out.

Now let's walk through each of the sections:

Section 1: Need for the Project

Section 2: Quality of Project Design

Section 3: Quality of Project Services

Section 4: Quality of Project Personnel

Section 5: Quality of the Management Plan

Section 6: Significance

SECTION 1: Need for the Project	
Absolute Priority 1 Requirement	Description of the neighborhood and level of distress (Requirement #1) (See *Application Guidelines*, page 9, and *Frequently Asked Questions* documents for explanations of how to define target neighborhood/region.)
Selection Criteria	**What the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in this section:** 1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators; 2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described; and 3. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project.

Tips and Strategies for Addressing the Selection Criteria for Section 1 of the Project Narrative:

In this section you want to cover three main areas to give a well-rounded sense of the problem(s):

1. **Geographic Parameters, Demographic Description, and Economic Indicators of Need:** Start by introducing the geographic area to be served. Describe the parameters of the neighborhood(s) or region and give a brief overview of the area and its demographics. For example: What is the demographic profile? Are the demographics changing? Are new immigrants coming in? Also describe the overall economic situation (see indicators below). (Note: If you are serving more than one neighborhood or regions, be sure to provide a rationale based on the indicators of need for the target areas.)

   Below is a sample list of commonly accepted indicators for measuring the health of a community:

- <u>Poverty and Income Status</u>: Percent of individuals/families living below poverty level and median household and family incomes.

- <u>Unemployment Rates</u>: Trends for local rates; comparison to county or state rate.

- <u>Educational Attainment Rates</u>: Highest degree or level of school completed by residents in the zip code(s) of the neighborhood(s)/region served.

- <u>Home Ownership Rates</u>: The percent of residents who own vs. rent.

- <u>Housing Cost</u>: The percent of household income spent on monthly rent/mortgage.

- <u>Medicaid Recipients</u>: Number of Medicaid recipients by age group and zip code/city.

- <u>Crime Rates</u>: Rates of violent and property crimes in target area. Juvenile crime statistics.

- <u>Gang Involvement</u>: Police reports on level of gang activity in the target area.

- <u>Juvenile Probation Rate</u>: Rate of probation per 1,000 persons for ages 18 and under.

- <u>Homeless Youth</u>: Number of homeless youth at schools in target area.

(Note: Possible sources for the above data include: U.S. Census (sort by city/zip code); United Way reports for your area; Employment Development Department (EDD) data; city websites; county health department reports; police reports; information collected by local CBOs.).

See also the Building Capacity section of this website, which lists resources that can help you in demonstrating need in your neighborhood.

2. **Academic and Family/Community Support Indicators of Need:** During the course of the planning grant, the Department of Education will require you to measure and set up a system for tracking 10 different academic and family/community support indicators that are key to improving educational and social outcomes for children and their families. An overview of these 10 indicators can be found on page 7 of the ***Pre-Application Webinar PowerPoint*** created by the Department of Education. Start here and use these as a baseline for discussing indicators of need that make the case for your project.

    You will also find further descriptions of indicators of need in these two areas in the ***Application Guidelines*** (pages 12-13) and in the ***Planning Grant Glossary*** (page 6). This will help you flesh out this part of Section 1. You are also welcome to add indicators of your own, such as information on free and reduced lunch rates, truancy/ suspension rates, test scores, number of Title I (high-poverty) schools, school safety, etc.

3. **Gaps or Weaknesses in Services, Infrastructure, or Opportunities:** To make the case for your project, your planning team and project partners need to work together to do an initial gaps analysis and brainstorm on what you would like to see in your community, in terms of systems improvement and integrated service delivery. To guide this brainstorming process, it may be helpful to look at the Federal Register announcement on page 24672 to see the list of core features of a successful project. For each feature, ask yourself: To what extent do we have this in place? What are the gaps? What areas need alignment and integration? What changes do we have to make to create healthier schools and a healthier community?

NEXT STEP: Before you go on to sort through the guidelines for Section 2: Quality of Project Design and Section 3: Quality of Project Services, we highly recommend that you step back and take a look at the purpose of the project and what activities you will be asked to carry out during the one-year planning grant. To help you with this, we have pulled this information from the guidelines and organized it in an easy-to-scan format. Once you have reviewed this overview of the planning grant activities and answered some of the questions for yourself, you should be able to tackle Sections 2 and 3, as well as the other sections of the grant, and plug the information in to the narrative in the sequence that the Department of Education is recommending (see Table 3).

OVERVIEW OF PLANNING GRANT ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING GRANT
This is your mission for the one-year planning grant period (Sept 2010-Sept 2011)

To create a multi-year implementation plan for a Promise Neighborhoods project in your neighborhood or region, based on a thorough needs assessment and segmentation analysis, which will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of all children in that neighborhood or region and, ultimately, transform the target area.

PLANNING GRANT ACTIVITIES

This is what you are required to do during the one-year planning grant period in order to create a multi-year implementation plan for a Promise Neighborhoods project. Your planning grant proposal will explain how you intend to carry out the required activities listed below.

DATA COLLECTION

Throughout the one-year planning grant you will be asked to track data for two purposes:

1) To track data for those indicators you want to measure in your Promise Neighborhoods project (the Dept of Ed calls these "Project Indicators"); and

2) To track data for specific indicators that will be part of a nationwide evaluation of the overall Promise Neighborhoods program (the Department of Education calls these "Program Indicators"). This category of data will be used to create a national body of data related to the proposed program model.

The Department is very specific about the definition of these indicators and has established 10 categories of indicators to be addressed. These fall into two areas:

- **Academic Indicators**: There are five categories of indicators related to academic programs, designed to address the needs of children of all age groups, from "cradle to college/career." You must collect data for all five categories for both your project and the overall Promise Neighborhoods program.

  o   If there are other things you think are important to track, you are welcome to create unique project indicators related to your community's multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project.

  o   You are required to create solutions only for the Project Indicators, not Program Indicators.

- **Family and Community Supports Indicators**: There are five categories of indicators in this area. Here is where it can get a little confusing. Grantees are required to collect data on the indicators listed in each of these categories for the sake of the national program evaluation (again, the Department of Education refers to these as "Program Indicators").

  o   For your multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project, however, you can choose to use these indicators or develop indicators of your own for each of the Family and Community Supports categories that are most relevant to your target population. These will become your "Project Indicators" and you will develop solutions to address each of them.

You need to identify how you will do this and who will do this data collection. Make sure this is reflected in your personnel section and that you have budgeted for it, unless you are going to cover the costs yourself, as part of the match.

Questions to Ask Yourself Now, As You Prepare the Planning Grant:
- What is our plan for data collection?
- Do we already have data for these categories, to serve as a baseline? If so, you can use this to strengthen your statement of needs section and inform the solutions you are proposing to develop during the grant period.

- If we don't have the data, how can we get it? Remember, you are required to track data in all 10 categories. Some data, such as mobility rates or home Internet access, may be more difficult to get. You need to begin to think about how you will obtain and monitor the data need for the grant.

DATA ANALYSIS

At the beginning of the one-year planning grant, the planning grant team must conduct a thorough **needs assessment**, based on an analysis of data for each of the 10 required project indicators of need.

The team must also conduct a **segmentation analysis**, to identify how certain sub-groups of children and adults are faring in each of the 10 indicator categories (i.e., is there a difference in test scores or graduation rates for different populations?). See the ***Planning Grant Glossary*** for definition of segmentation analysis.

These efforts will provide baseline data and help the team set targets for improvements for each of the 10 categories of project indicators. You will use this data to develop a set of solutions that will then be implemented during your multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project.

Questions to Ask Yourself Now, As You Prepare the Planning Grant:
- How will the needs assessment and segmentation analysis be conducted? Who will compile the data? Who will analyze the data? Do you need to build in money for a project data person or a consultant to help you with this? If so, make sure it is in the personnel section and budget. Finally, how will you ensure that all segments of the community have access to the data and are involved in the analysis and interpretation of it and the subsequent development of solutions?

DATA SYSTEMS

As part of the planning grant you will be asked to create a plan to implement a longitudinal data system to measure academic and family and community support indicators for children in your neighborhood/region and disaggregate this data by sub-group (see Requirement 9 under Absolute Priority 1 in the Application Guidelines, page 12). Moreover, this longitudinal data system must be linked to school-based, LEA, and state systems, and accessible to project partners while abiding by privacy laws.

Questions to Ask Yourself Now, As You Prepare the Planning Grant:
- How will you approach this task? Will you be building on ongoing efforts? If so, how? What are the various challenges (systems, technological, political, logistical, legal) you may face? How will you address these? What is a realistic timeline for rolling out this project? Who needs to be at the table to make this happen? Do you need a consultant or equipment to do this? If so, make sure these items are in the personnel section and budget.

PLANNING SOLUTIONS

During the one-year planning grant you will be refining your proposed solutions (i.e., programs, services, policies, systems changes, etc.) for project indicators in each of the 10 categories and creating a detailed plan for how you will implement these solutions during your multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project. Please note: Even though you will be developing these solutions during the planning grant, **you must identify your solutions now and list them in the planning grant proposal**. You may propose multiple solutions for one indicator and/or propose solutions that address more than one indicator — just as long as all of the indicators are covered. Solutions will consist of two main types:

1. **School Reform Solutions:** The Department of Education requires you to work with at least one school. This is required and the Department is very specific about what it wants to see here. Please review the *Application Guidelines* (page 9) and the *Planning Grants Glossary* to learn about the three types of schools and four categories of school reform models that must be incorporated. In addition see the Education Policy section in What is a Promise Neighborhood.

2. **Other Solutions:** The school reform solutions above will only address project indicators in the Academic Program categories dealing with students at specific schools in your neighborhood. Depending on which schools you choose, this could be elementary school, middle school, or high schools students, or a combination.

You are responsible, however, for developing solutions that serve **all** children in your community. For this reason, you must make sure that you have proposed solutions identified for children **outside** of that particular school or set of schools and for addressing the project indicators in each of the Academic Program categories not involved in that school reform. You must also develop solutions for each of your Family/Community Support project indicators.

In developing solutions, the Department of Education requests that you:

- Build on and incorporate existing programs in your community;

- Involve community partners wherever possible;

- Demonstrate that the solutions proposed are research and evidence-based.;

- Show how the solutions you propose are interlinked and part of a seamless delivery system.

A note about project design: It can be a challenge to choose the correct program model or services and strategies for you project, as well as to decide what constitutes success for your project. To help you in this process, see the Building Capacity section of this website, especially the resources for Project Design and Project Services. You may also want to develop your own logic model for internal planning processes as you prepare the grant proposal.

Questions to Ask Yourself Now, As You Prepare the Planning Grant:
- SCHOOL REFORM: The school reform models listed here often entail major institutional changes, such as replacing the principal and replacing faculty, as well as setting ambitious academic improvement targets, revising instruction, and providing intensive professional development activities. Are you ready to undertake this level of reform as part of your multi-year project? Who needs to be at the table to plan this reform effort and identify the steps and costs involved? The school and school district must agree to this and sign off on it in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the planning grant.

- OTHER SOLUTIONS: How will you build on/strengthen/revise/replace programs that already exist in your community? What program/services might you propose instead? Why are you using that particular strategy or program model? What evidence can you produce, from previous experience and from the best practices and literature in the field, to make a convincing case that this is the right direction/solution for the target population and neighborhood/region?

LEVERAGING RESOURCES

You will be required to leverage resources during the planning grant period and also describe how you will secure the funds and partnerships to sustain and grow the project beyond your neighborhood/ region by the end of the multi-year Promise Neighborhood project. You will also be required to show that you have the capacity to fundraise and manage contributions and large grants and contracts.

Questions to Ask Yourself Now, As You Prepare the Planning Grant:
- Do you have philanthropic partners at the table now? If not, what are your plans to bring them in? Do you have government grants that you can build on with this project? What is the fundraising track record of the lead agency? Of the project partners? Have you managed large government grants and contracts before? Do you have the systems in place to do so? If not, what do you need to do to get this in place? Who will be involved in the efforts to leverage funds? To manage funds?

EVALUATION
You will to work with a national evaluator selected by the Department of Education to gather data for the specific indicators listed in each of the 10 categories. Again, these are called Program Indicators and are separate from your Project Indicators, which will include much of the same data but, in certain categories, will also be measuring additional indicators of your own selection. Please see Requirement 9 under the Absolute Priority 1 in the ***Application Guidelines***, page 12 for more detail. ***Questions to Ask Yourself Now, As You Prepare the Planning Grant:*** What tools and methods will you use to evaluate your project? Who will do this? Do you have in-house staff with this expertise or do you need to hire an internal project evaluator? How will you use this information to make changes along the way and inform your multi-year project?

SECTION 2: Quality of Project Design	
Absolute Priority 1 Requirements	• Description of how the applicant will plan the continuum of solutions (Requirement #2)
	• Description of how the applicant will plan to use data (Requirement #8)
	• Description of commitment to work with national evaluator (Requirement #9)
	• Description of indicators to be used for need assessment (Requirement #7)
Selection Criteria	**What the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in this section:**
	1. The extent to which the applicant describes how it will <u>plan to build a continuum of solutions</u> designed to significantly <u>improve the academic and family and community support indicators</u> in this notice;
	2. The extent to which the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to develop a strategy, that <u>will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools</u> described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
	3. The extent to which the applicant describes <u>strategies for using data</u> to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;
	4. The extent to which the applicant <u>identifies and describes academic and family and community support indicators</u> to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;
	5. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a <u>commitment to work with the Department and with a national evaluator</u> 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
	6. The extent to which the proposed project will be <u>coordinated with similar or related efforts, and</u> with other appropriate <u>community, state, and federal resources</u>.

Tips and Strategies for Addressing the Selection Criteria for Section 2 of the Project Narrative:

- Review and make sure you understand the following terms from the ***Planning Grant Glossary***

  o Continuum of services

  o Persistently lowest-achieving school

  o Low-performing schools

  o Effective school

  o Multiple domains of early learning

  o Increased learning time

  o Moderate evidence and Strong evidence

- The Department of Education strongly recommends that you respond to the related requirements in the order presented above and we suggest you follow this advice. However, in planning your responses, it may be helpful to start with exploring Requirement #7, which asks you to describe the indicators for the needs assessment (i.e., what you are measuring and trying to improve through this multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project), and then go back and address the other requirements. You can then write your narrative in the order specified.

- Take advantages of the resources on program design and school reform.

- **Note**: Although the primary target population is children, you can propose solutions for adults that support student learning, such as family literacy programs.

SECTION 3: Quality of Project Services	
Absolute Priority 1 Requirements	*NOTE: You will see that the same requirements are listed here in Section 3 as in Section 2. This is not a mistake. The Department of Education has put the requirements for these two sections together; it is up to the applicant to determine how to address these requirements across the two sections. However you choose to do it, make sure the requirements get addressed.* • Description of how the applicant will plan the continuum of solutions (Requirement #2) • Description of how the applicant will plan to use data (Requirement #8) • Description of commitment to work with national evaluator (Requirement #9) • Description of indicators to be used for need assessment (Requirement #7) (See *Application Guidelines*, page 9, and Frequently Asked Questions documents for explanations of how to define target neighborhood/region.)
Selection Criteria	**What the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in this section:** 1. The extent to which the applicant describes proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence; 2. 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 3. The extent to which the applicant explains 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.

Tips and Strategies for Addressing the Selection Criteria for Section 3 of the Project Narrative:

• One way to think about Section 3 vs. Section 2: Section 2 seems to be about what you are planning to "do" in these areas (i.e., plan a continuum of solutions, identify indicators, use data, work with the national evaluator, etc.). Section 3, in contrast, seems more to be about explaining why this is going to work and being accountable (i.e., showing that the proposed solutions are evidence-based; discussing how the academic interventions proposed will lead to improved achievement levels for all children in the target area, and especially for under-performing sub-groups, based on the evidence from other organizations and studies that have used these intervention strategies with similar populations; and discussing how you will use data to plan targeted academic interventions, and, perhaps, family/community support interventions, during the course of the multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project).

• Again, review the materials on the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink website about how other communities have approached creating a cradle-to-career continuum of solutions in their neighborhood or region, such as the example of the Harlem Children's Zone.

SECTION 4: Quality of Project Personnel	
Absolute Priority 1 Requirement	Description of the applicant's organizational capacity to plan and implement a Promise Neighborhood (Requirement #3) (See *Application Guidelines*, page 11)

Selection Criteria	**What the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in this section:**
	
	1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project personnel who will carry out the proposed project.
	
	2. In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the 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.
	
	3. Relevant experience includes the applicant's experience in and lessons learned by—
	
	    i. Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute 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.

Tips and Strategies for Addressing the Selection Criteria for Section 4 of the Project Narrative*:*

- **IMPORTANT:** See Requirement 3 under Absolute Priority 1 in the *Application Guidelines*, page 11. You will get more detail about some of the criteria listed above and discover that there is actually an additional thing they want covered: applicant experience in implementing efforts that are similar to the Promise Neighborhoods project. This last part is in keeping with what it says in other parts of the application, namely that applicants must show that they are already implementing at least one of the solutions they propose, to demonstrate capacity.

- **This section really consists of two areas of focus:** 1) Proving that you have the right people in place to plan and carry out the project and 2) proving that you have a strong lead organization and leaders at the helm. In terms of personnel, it is stronger if you are able to identify now the staff and consultants you will use, so that you can talk about their background and qualifications and how they will contribute to the success of the project. If they already have experience working together on previous projects, even better! Remember to include resumes for key project personnel. In the narrative you may also want to talk about the background and experience and collaborative efforts of key project leaders in the governance structure.

- When talking about organizational experience, **give specific examples.** Focus on experience managing large grant projects, community redevelopment projects, educational reform projects, etc. Talk about fundraising success and the organization's relationships with funders.

- **REMEMBER: THIS SECTION HAS THE MOST POINTS.** While the key personnel section is usually a lesser part of many applications, for this application it is critical. To find ways to strengthen your presentation of material in this section, visit the Building Your Capacity section of the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink website.

SECTION 5: Quality of the Management Plan	
Absolute Priority 1 Requirement	• Description of how the applicant will plan to sustain and "scale up" the proposed Promise Neighborhood. (Requirement 4) • Description of commitment the applicant anticipates receiving from partners, including the preliminary memorandum of understanding described in the paragraph 5(a). (Requirement 5) (See *Application Guidelines*, page 11.)

Selection Criteria	**What the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in this section:**
	
	1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.
	
	2. In determining the quality of the management plan of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:
	
	  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;
	
	  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;
	
	  iii. How the applicant 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.

Tips and Strategies for Addressing the Selection Criteria for Section 5 of the Project Narrative:

• Discuss the specific responsibilities of the project director and governance structure and how they will work together (i.e., how often will they meet, outline of planning and decision-making process) to make sure the project is on time and within budget.

• Talk about how they will know they are on track; where possible, mention tangible products or deliverables.

• Consider including a project timeline illustrating key milestones in planning process.

• List the ways diverse communities/constituencies were involved in the development of the planning grant application and will be involved in the planning process during the one-year planning grant.

How will the planning grant team ensure input from key stakeholders and make the community aware of the project that is being developed? Be specific (e.g., you will create a website, do e-mail blasts, hold town meetings, do surveys and focus groups, etc.).

- Talk about specific examples when the lead agency and/or partners have managed a grant project or undertaken a neighborhood initiative and succeeded in securing the funds to institutionalize, sustain, or expand this project. How did you do this? What did you learn that might be useful in implementing a multi-year Promise Neighborhoods project and bringing it to scale? What are some of the strengths of your coalition?

- See Management Plan resources under the Building Your Capacity section of this website.

SECTION 6: Significance	
Absolute Priority 1 Requirement	• 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. (Requirement #6)
	• 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. (Requirement #7)
	(See *Application Guidelines*, page 11)
Selection Criteria	**What the peer reviewers are going to be looking for in this section:**
	1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
	2. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:
	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 of the model in a variety of settings.

Tips and Strategies for Addressing the Selection Criteria for Section 6 of the Project Narrative*:*

• This section builds on the discussions in earlier section and is a chance to make one last statement both about capacity and innovation. What is unique about your project or strategies that would make it a model program that could be replicated in other communities across the nation? For more information on demonstrating financial sustainability and sustainability strategies, please see the resources under the Significance section of Building Your Capacity.

E. HELP ALONG THE WAY

Resources to Help You Build a Strong Project and Proposal:

Please explore the resources and links on the website of the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink to help you as you develop your Promise Neighborhoods project. Good luck!