Promise Neighborhoods Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Innovation and Improvement
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**Purpose of the FAQs**

The purpose of these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is to provide information about the Promise Neighborhoods Program. The FAQs do not impose any requirements beyond those included in the Promise Neighborhoods Program notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 2016 (notice) and other applicable laws and regulations. In addition, they do not create or confer any rights for or on any person.

The Department will provide additional or updated program guidance as necessary on its Promise Neighborhoods Web site: www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html. If you have further questions that are not answered here, please email PromiseNeighborhoods@ed.gov. We cannot respond to individual questions, but we will post answers to the most frequently asked questions on our Web site.

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A. Purpose

A-1. What is the purpose of a Promise Neighborhoods grant?

A Promise Neighborhoods implementation grant is a three- to five-year award to support eligible organizations in carrying out their plans to create a continuum of solutions that will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in the target neighborhood. These grants will aid eligible organizations that have developed a plan that demonstrates the need for implementation of a Promise Neighborhood strategy in the geographic area they are targeting, a sound strategy, and the capacity to implement the plan.

A-2. What are the expected outcomes for Promise Neighborhoods, and what types of activities are allowable?

Grantees will use grant funds to develop the administrative capacity necessary to successfully implement a continuum of solutions, such as managing partnerships, integrating multiple funding sources, and supporting the data system. Accordingly, the Department is requiring that grantees undertake the following activities during the implementation period—

(1) Implement a continuum of solutions that addresses neighborhood challenges, as identified in a needs assessment and segmentation analysis, and that will improve results for children and youth in the neighborhood.
(2) Continue to build and strengthen partnerships that will provide solutions along the continuum of solutions and that will commit resources to sustain and scale up what works.

(3) Collect data on indicators at least annually, and use and improve a data system for learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.

(4) Demonstrate progress on goals for improving systems, such as by making changes in policies and organizations, and by leveraging resources to sustain and scale up what works.

(5) Participate in a community of practice, as described in the notice.

The Department will monitor the grantees’ progress toward completion of these activities. During the grant period, grantees must be able to demonstrate performance, or show significant progress toward completion of activities (1)-(5), including by responding to the Department’s questions and concerns regarding progress.

A-3. Has the Department set a limit for the number of grants that will be awarded to any individual State, city, or region?

No. The Department has not set any limits regarding the geographic distribution of grant awards. All applications will be evaluated and scored by peer reviewers using the selection criteria described in the notice. The Department will prepare a rank-order list of applications for each absolute priority based solely on the peer reviewers’ evaluation of their quality according to the selection criteria. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.217(c)(3), the Department will make final awards after considering the rank ordering and other information including an applicant's performance, use of funds, and compliance history under a previous award under any Department program.
B. Eligible Applicants and Partners

B-1. Who is eligible to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?

An eligible organization to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant is an organization that—

a) Is representative of the geographic area proposed to be served (as defined in the notice);
b) Is one of the following:
   i. A nonprofit organization that meets the definition of a nonprofit under 34 CFR 77.1(c),
      which may include a faith-based nonprofit organization,
   ii. An institution of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act
      of 1965, as amended,
   iii. An Indian tribe (as defined in the notice),
c) Currently provides at least one of the solutions from the applicant’s continuum of solutions in
    the geographic area proposed to be served.
d) Operates or proposes to work with and involve in carrying out its proposed project, in
    coordination with the school’s LEA, at least one public elementary or secondary school that is
    located within the identified geographic area that the grant will serve.

For the purposes of Absolute Priority 3 (Promise Neighborhoods in Tribal Communities), an eligible
applicant is an eligible organization that partners with an Indian Tribe or is an Indian Tribe that meets
the definition of an eligible organization.

B-2. May a consortium of eligible entities apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?

No. Only a single eligible entity may apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant.

B-3. How does an entity, excluding an institution of higher education, provide verification that it meets the
definition of a nonprofit organization as defined under 34 CFR 77.1(c)?

Consistent with 34 CFR 75.51(b), an entity may show that it is a nonprofit organization (as defined under
34 CFR 77.1(c)) by providing any of the following:

1) Proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an
   organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3)
   of the Internal Revenue Code;
2) A statement from a State taxing body or the State attorney general certifying
   that:
   i) The organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State; and
   ii) No part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or
       individual;
3) A certified copy of the applicant’s certificate of incorporation or similar
   document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or
4) Any item described in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this section [immediately
   above] if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together
   with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local
   nonprofit affiliate.
Documentation verifying the nonprofit status should be included in Appendix E of the application.

**B-4. Is there a requirement for matching funds?**

Yes, an applicant must demonstrate that it has established a commitment from one or more entities in the public or private sector, which may include Federal, state, and local public agencies, philanthropic organizations, private businesses, or individuals, to provide matching funds.

An applicant must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations equal to at least 100 percent of its grant award, except that an applicant proposing a project that meets Absolute Priority 2: Promise Neighborhoods in Rural Communities or Absolute Priority 3: Promise Neighborhoods in Tribal Communities must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations equal to at least 50 percent of the grant award. At least 10 percent of an applicant’s total match must be cash or in-kind contributions from the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, private businesses, or individuals.

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

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

For more FAQs about the matching requirement, see [B: Matching Requirement](#).

**B-5. May a newly created eligible organization apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?**

Yes; however, a newly created eligible organization must still meet one of the absolute priorities as well as the other requirements set forth in the notice. Under the absolute priorities, an applicant must provide a description of its organizational capacity to plan and implement a proposed Promise Neighborhood. In the case of a newly created eligible organization, the applicant must describe the prior performance of its management team in developing and managing projects or programs similar to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

**B-6. May an eligible applicant that does not currently have a governing board or advisory board that meets the criteria described in the definition of “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served” create a new advisory board or modify an existing board in order to be eligible to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?**
An eligible applicant may create a new advisory board or modify an existing board so long as the governing board or advisory board meets the definition of “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served” and is established before the applicant submits its Promise Neighborhood grant application.

B-7. May an eligible applicant that proposes to serve a community with a migrant population apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant, given that proposals must focus on a defined geographic area and migrant children and families will likely reside only temporarily in such an area?

Yes. Promise Neighborhoods grants will support activities that lead to a plan to create or to implement a continuum of services that supports communities in distress and all children who live within them. The notice does not exclude any group of children in a community or any particular type of distressed community.

B-8. Can a PN applicant's governing board, if it has an advisory board that meets all the requirements for being representative of the area to be served, have a membership that is made up of public officials?

As long as a Promise Neighborhood applicant has an advisory board that meets the requirements for being geographically representative of the area to be served, is not required to meet any requirements on the membership of its governing board, including the limit on public officials who can be members. Similarly, a Promise Neighborhood applicant with a governing board that meets the requirements for being representative of the area it serves does not need an advisory board that meets those requirements.

B-9. The notice states that a maximum of one-half of the Promise Neighborhood’s governing or advisory board may be made up of “public officials.” How does the Department define “public official?”

A public official (as defined in the notice) means elected officials (e.g., council members, aldermen and women, commissioners, State legislators, Congressional representatives, members of the school board), appointed public officials (e.g., members of a planning or zoning commission, or of any other regulatory or advisory boards or commissions), or individuals who are not necessarily public officials, but who have been appointed by a public official to serve on the Promise Neighborhoods governing board or advisory board.

B-10. Are Indian tribes eligible to apply for Promise Neighborhoods grants?

In order to be eligible for a Promise Neighborhoods grant, an Indian tribe must be any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe, 25 U.S.C. 479a and 479a-1 or any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 43 U.S.C. 1601, et seq., that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. An Indian tribe that meets this definition is eligible to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant so long as it also (1) currently provides at least one of the solutions from the applicant’s continuum of solutions in the geographic area proposed to be served; and (2) operates or proposes to work with and involve in carrying out its proposed project, in coordination with the school’s LEA, at least one public elementary or secondary school that is located within the identified geographic area that the grant will serve.
B-11. If an entity has both a governing board and an advisory board, must both boards be “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” as defined in the notice, in order for the entity to be eligible to receive a grant?

No. To be considered "representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” an eligible entity must have at least one governing or advisory board that meets the definition of “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” as defined in the notice, and residents of the geographic area proposed to be served must have an active role in the organization’s decision-making. An entity is not required to have both a governing board and an advisory board that meets these requirements.

B-12. What entity may act as the fiscal agent for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?

The Department will award a Promise Neighborhoods grant to the applicant, which then becomes the grantee. Under all Department grant programs, the grantee is the fiscal agent. A grantee may rely on a third party to perform fiscal management functions related to its Promise Neighborhoods grant. The grantee, however, remains the fiscal agent for the grant and, as such, is responsible for ensuring that grant funds are used for allowable and documented costs.

As defined in the notice, an eligible organization (and, if successful, a grantee) may be:

- A nonprofit organization that meets the definition of a nonprofit under 34 CFR 77.1(c), which may include a faith-based nonprofit organization;
- An institution of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended; or
- An Indian tribe (as defined in the notice).

B-13. Is an eligible organization required to have an office or headquarters located in the geographic area proposed to be served?

No. However, an eligible organization is required to be representative of the geographic area proposed to be served (as defined in the notice) and must currently be providing at least one of the solutions from the applicant’s proposed continuum of solutions in the geographic area proposed to be served.

B-14. May an organization apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant if that entity does not currently meet the definition of an eligible entity but anticipates being able to meet that definition at some point after the application deadline?

No. In order to be eligible for a Promise Neighborhoods grant, an organization must meet all of the eligibility requirements on or before the application deadline date. An entity that does not meet the definition of a nonprofit organization under 34 CFR 77.1(c), the definition of an institution of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or the definition of an Indian tribe, on or before July 23, 2016 is not eligible to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant.

B-15. Has the Department established any limits or restrictions on the number of applications that a single organization may submit or the number of applicants that a single entity may partner with?

No. The Department has not established any limits or restrictions on the number of applications that a single organization may submit or partnerships in which a single entity may take part. However, the
Department will not provide funding to support duplicate projects for the same geographic area or pay for the same costs more than once.

B-16. **May an eligible organization propose to serve a geographic area located in the outlying areas?**

Yes. An eligible organization may propose to serve a geographic area in the outlying areas (as defined in Section 9101(30) of the ESEA), which include Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and, because Promise Neighborhoods is a discretionary grant program, the Freely Associated States of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

B-17. **If an organization uses an advisory board to meet the definition of “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” are there additional requirements beyond those described in the notice that the advisory board must meet?**

No. In order for an organization to be considered “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” residents of that geographic area must have an active role in decision-making and at least one-third of the eligible organization’s governing board or advisory board must meet the descriptions in paragraphs (a)-(d) of the definition of “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” in the notice. The Department has not established any additional requirements for an advisory board. See B-7 for additional information regarding newly created boards.

B-18. **Must an eligible applicant currently provide solutions in at least one school in order to meet the eligibility requirement of operating or partnering with at least one school?**

No. An eligible applicant is not required to currently provide solutions in a school in order to be eligible for a Promise Neighborhoods grant. However, an applicant who does not operate a school must describe how it proposes to work with and involve in carrying out its proposed project, in coordination with the school’s LEA, at least one public elementary or secondary school that is located within the identified geographic area that the grant will serve. In addition, an eligible entity must currently provide at least one solution from the proposed continuum of solutions in the geographic area proposed to be served.
C. Priorities

C-1. **Are there requirements on the number of students that must be served in a Promise Neighborhood?**

No; however, the Department expects that the goal of every proposed Promise Neighborhood will be to ensure that children in the geographically defined area improve academic and developmental outcomes from the cradle through college to career, thereby improving the likelihood that children will have the tools, resources, and supports to succeed academically. An applicant should ensure that its management plan is adequate to support the proposed activities that lead to the development of a plan to implement a Promise Neighborhood.

C-2. **What does it mean to break down agency “silos” as cited in the Purpose of Program section of the notice?**

Breaking down agency “silos” means ensuring that multiple public agencies at the Federal, State, or local levels work together to share information, plan jointly, focus on improving outcomes, and ensure that outcomes are shared, communicated, and analyzed on an on-going basis. When agencies break down “silos,” they can more efficiently and effectively provide comprehensive services to address the needs of children and families in distressed communities.

C-3. **What is the Department’s definition of “need” in the context of Promise Neighborhoods?**

The notice describes the types of need that communities served by Promise Neighborhood projects are likely to have but does not include a single, specific definition of need. Applicants must describe the geographically defined area to be served and the level of distress in that area based on indicators of need (as defined in the notice) and other relevant indicators.

C-4. **Must an applicant meet Absolute Priorities 1, 2, and 3 in order to be considered for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?**

No. An applicant must meet one of the three absolute priorities, as described in the notice. An applicant must indicate in its application whether the applicant is applying under Absolute Priority 1, Absolute Priority 2, or Absolute Priority 3. An applicant that applies under Absolute Priority 2 but is not eligible for funding under Absolute Priority 2, or applies under Absolute Priority 3 but is not eligible for funding under Absolute Priority 3 may be considered for funding under Absolute Priority 1, provided that the applicant meets the requirements under Absolute Priority 1.

C-5. **May an applicant propose to serve neighborhoods in both rural and non-rural communities in a single application?**

Yes. Applicants may propose to serve multiple, non-contiguous geographically defined areas that include both a rural community (as defined in the notice) and a non-rural community. In cases where an applicant proposes to serve a rural and non-rural community through a single grant, the applicant must explain its rationale for including both communities and will be scored under Absolute Priority 1.
C-6. **What does it mean to “scale up” a proposed Promise Neighborhood in a rural community?**

To “scale up” a proposed Promise Neighborhood in a rural community may mean serving additional neighborhoods within a town, serving children in an additional defined geographic area within the county but outside the initial neighborhood, or expanding to neighboring towns or counties.

C-7. **Must the geographic area proposed to be served demonstrate a specified minimum level of need?**

The Department has not established a minimum threshold of need for the geographic area proposed to be served by an eligible applicant. Applicants must describe the geographically defined area to be served and the level of distress in that area based on indicators of need (as defined in the notice) and other relevant indicators. Peer reviewers will consider the need for the proposed project, including the magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the project, as well as the extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructures, or opportunities will be identified and addressed by the project.

C-8. **Is an eligible applicant required to operate or partner with at least one target school that is within the geographic area proposed to be served?**

Yes. Eligible applicants must operate or partner with at least one target school that is either a persistently lowest-achieving school (as defined in the notice) or low-performing school (as defined in the notice). The schools must be within the geographic area proposed to be served. In cases where an eligible applicant operates or partners with a target school that does not serve all students in the neighborhood, the applicant must partner with at least one additional school that serves students in the neighborhood.

C-9. **Is an eligible applicant permitted to partner with a school that is located outside of the geographic area proposed to be served?**

Yes, an eligible applicant may partner with a school that is located outside of the geographic area proposed to be served, so long as the applicant also partners with at least one target school that is within the geographic area proposed to be served.

C-10. **What types of applications meet the requirements of Absolute Priority 2: Promise Neighborhoods in Rural Communities?**

In order to meet the requirements of Absolute Priority 2, an applicant must meet all requirements in Absolute Priority 1 and propose a project that will serve one or more rural communities only. As defined in the notice, “rural community” means a community that—

1. Is served by an 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 VI, Part B of the ESEA. An applicant may determine whether a particular LEA is eligible under these programs by referring to information on the following Department Web sites. For the SRSA program, see [www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligible09/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligible09/index.html). For the RLIS program, see [www.ed.gov/programs/reaprlisp/eligible09/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/reaprlisp/eligible09/index.html); or

2. Includes only schools designated with a school locale code of 42 or 43. Applicants may determine school locale codes by referring to the following Department Web site: [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/).
C-11. **What types of applications will meet the requirements of Absolute Priority 3: Promise Neighborhoods in Tribal Communities?**

In order to meet the requirements of Absolute Priority 3, an applicant must (1) meet all requirements in Absolute Priority 1; (2) propose a project that will serve one or more Indian tribes (as defined in the notice); and (3) either partner with an Indian tribe or be an Indian tribe that meets the definition of an eligible entity.

C-12. **The notice states that one possible indicator of family and community support need is the percentage of the residents living at or below the Federal poverty threshold. What are the current Federal poverty thresholds?**

Federal poverty thresholds can be found at:
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/thresh10.xls

C-13. **May an applicant propose to partner with a school that is not a persistently-lowest achieving school or a low-performing school?**

Applicants are required to partner with at least one target school that is either a persistently lowest-achieving school or a low-performing school (as described in the notice), within the geographic area proposed to be served. An applicant (or one or more of its partners) may serve an effective school or schools (as defined in this notice) but only if the applicant (or one or more of its partners) also serves at least one low-performing school (as defined in this notice) or persistently lowest-achieving school (as defined in this notice). Applicants should carefully review the “Notes” in the NIA to these definitions in order to understand the full range of schools that the Department will, for purposes of this competition, accept as “low-performing” or “persistently-lowest achieving schools.”

C-14. **Are applicants required to operate or partner with a target school that is a high school?**

No. Applicants are required to operate or partner with at least one target school that is either a persistently lowest-achieving school or a low-performing school. There are no requirements for the grade levels that must be served by the target school or schools described in a planning grant application. However, applicants are required to propose how they will create a feasible plan to implement or present a plan to implement a complete continuum of solutions for children in the target school or schools, which include programs, policies, and personnel, that are linked to improved academic outcomes for children in kindergarten through the 12th grade. In addition, applicants must ensure, as appropriate, that children and youth in the neighborhood who do not attend the target school or schools have access to solutions within the continuum of solutions.

C-15. **Must applicants describe how they will plan to provide or to implement a complete continuum of solutions for all students who attend the target school or schools, or only those students who attend the target school or schools and live in the Promise Neighborhood?**

An applicant must describe its strategy for building a continuum of solutions. The strategy must be designed to ensure that over time, a greater proportion of children and youth in the neighborhood who attend the target school or schools have access to a complete continuum of solutions, and must ensure that over time, a greater proportion of children and youth in the neighborhood who do not attend the
target school or schools have access to solutions within the continuum of solutions. The strategy must also ensure that, over time, students not living in the neighborhood who attend the target school or schools have access to solutions within the continuum of solutions.

C-16. **Is an eligible applicant required to describe a project indicator for each of the education and family and community support results listed in the notice?**

An applicant must use the education results indicators described in Table 1 of the notice as project indicators; an applicant may, but is not required to develop or describe additional project indicators for education results. For family and community support results, an applicant may either: (a) use the indicators in Table 2 of the notice as project indicators; or (b) develop and describe other project indicators that align with the goals and objectives of its project for each of the family and community results.

C-17. **Where can applicants find a list of the persistently lowest-achieving schools identified by their State?**

Information regarding the persistently lowest-achieving schools for a number of States can be found at the following Department Web site: [http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/summary/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/summary/index.html). This list includes only those States whose School Improvement Grant applications have been approved by the Department. And, as noted in the response to question C13, applicants should review the “Note” following the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” to know the full range of schools the Department will, for purposes of this competition, accept as meeting this definition.

C-18. **Must an eligible applicant identify the project director and other project personnel in its grant application?**

An applicant is not required to identify the project director or other project personnel in its application. However, as part of their review of applications, peer reviewers will consider the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. Specifically, reviewers will consider the experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the applicant’s management team and project director. If a project director has not been identified, the applicant may consider providing a job description for the position.

C-19. **What requirements has the Department established for an applicant’s partnership with a school that is not a target school, as described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1?**

As described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1, an eligible applicant that operates or partners with a target school that does not serve all students in the neighborhood must partner with at least one additional school that serves students in the neighborhood. The Department has not established any specific requirements regarding this partnership, but an applicant might work with the school partner to ensure, as appropriate, that children in the neighborhood who do not attend the target school or schools have access to solutions designed to significantly improve educational and developmental outcomes, as described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1.
C-20. **How can an applicant identify the low-performing schools in its State?**

As defined in the notice, low-performing schools are schools receiving assistance through Title I that are in corrective action or restructuring, as determined by the State educational agency under section 1116 of the ESEA, and the secondary schools (both middle and high schools) in the State that are equally as low-achieving as these Title I schools and are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds. States are required to identify schools that are in corrective action or restructuring and make this information available to the public. Applicants should refer to their State educational agencies for current information about the low-performing schools in their States. And, as noted in response to question C-13, applicants should review the “Note” following the definition of “low-performing schools” to know the full range of schools the Department will, for purposes of this competition, accept as meeting this definition.

C-21. **May an eligible applicant propose to partner with a target school that is currently implementing one of the four school intervention models?**

Yes. An eligible applicant may propose to partner with a target school that is currently implementing one of the four school intervention models described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1.
D. Target Population and Neighborhood

D-1. In order for an eligible organization to be considered “representative of the geographic area proposed to be served,” residents of the geographic area must have an active role in the organization’s decision-making. How will the Department determine whether community residents truly play an active role in decision-making?

In the memorandum of understanding described in Absolute Priority 1, applicants must describe the governance structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood, including how the eligible organization’s governing board or advisory board is representative of the geographic area proposed to be served, and how residents of the geographic area have an active role in the organization’s decision making. This will provide the Department with information to determine whether community residents play an active role in the organization’s decision-making for the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

D-2. May solutions supported by a Promise Neighborhoods grant occur outside of school buildings?

Yes. Although improving and supporting schools is the centerpiece of the Promise Neighborhoods Program, and schools will likely be the home of many solutions along the cradle-through-college-to-career continuum, the Department acknowledges that learning occurs in many settings within a community and may occur outside of school buildings. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with entities such as an LEA; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and providers of family and community supports, all of which may deliver solutions in a variety of settings.

D-3. Has the Department established requirements for the size of the geographic area to be served by a proposed Promise Neighborhood?

No. There are no requirements regarding the size of the geographic area to be served by a proposed Promise Neighborhood. Furthermore, the geographic area to be served need not be geographically contiguous. The geographic area must be determined by indicators of need (as defined in the notice). Moreover, applicants should ensure that their management plan is adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed budget on time and within budget.

D-4. Must the geographically defined area of the proposed Promise Neighborhood align with the attendance zone of the school with which the eligible applicant proposes to partner?

No. Although there may be programmatic benefits, such as easier data collection, in aligning the geographic boundaries of the proposed geographic area with school attendance zones or other geographically defined boundaries such as census tracts, the Department believes that eligible applicants are best positioned to determine the geographic boundaries of their proposed Promise Neighborhoods.

D-5. May a geographically defined area include more than one governmental jurisdiction, e.g., two cities?

Yes. Although there may be programmatic benefits, such as easier data collection, in creating the geographic boundaries of the proposed geographic area within a single governmental jurisdiction, the
Department believes that eligible applicants are best positioned to determine the geographic boundaries of their proposed Promise Neighborhoods.

D-6. Are eligible applicants required to propose to serve a geographic area that includes the attendance zone of a high school in which the graduation rate is less than 60 percent?

No. However, an eligible applicant must propose to serve a geographically defined area in which there are multiple signs of distress based on indicators of need (as defined in the notice), which include both education and family and community support needs, as well as other relevant indicators. One of the indicators of education need that an applicant may include in its description of need is that all or a portion of a 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 (as defined in the notice) is less than 60 percent.
E. Project Design

E-1. What is a continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions?

A continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions is defined in the notice as a set of programs, policies, practices, services, systems, and supports, with strong schools at the center, designed to ensure that children in a Promise Neighborhood improve education and developmental outcomes from cradle through college to career. These solutions must be based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence (as defined in the notice), be linked and integrated seamlessly (as defined in the notice), and include both education programs and family and community supports (both as defined in the notice).

E-2. Does the Department expect that some or all of the solutions in the cradle-through-college-to-career continuum will be provided by partner organizations based in the proposed Promise Neighborhood?

The Department believes there are many programmatic benefits of providing solutions that are developed and managed by organizations based in the proposed Promise Neighborhood. This is why the Department is requiring that an eligible applicant be a nonprofit organization, institution of higher education, or an Indian tribe that is representative of the geographic area proposed to be served; and that currently provides at least one of the solutions from the applicant’s continuum of solutions in the geographic area proposed to be served. There is, however, no requirement that all solutions be provided by organizations based in the proposed neighborhood. The primary focus in developing and selecting solutions must be whether the solutions will significantly improve the educational outcomes and support the healthy development and well-being of children in the neighborhood.

E-3. Will preference be given to applications that combine efforts from multiple neighborhoods from the same city or geographic area?

No, the Secretary will not give any competitive preference to regional or consolidated applications. However, the Department strongly encourages applicants to develop partnerships with LEAs; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and providers of family and community supports.

E-4. When will grant funds be available to selected grantees?

Grants will be awarded no later than December 31, 2016. Funds will be awarded on an annual basis pending appropriation by Congress.

E-5. How may a Promise Neighborhoods grantee draw down funds to pay for expenses related to its grant?

EDGAR, at 2 CFR 200.305(b)(1)) provides that grantees should minimize the period of time between their drawdown of grant funds (i.e., the transfer of those funds to a grantee from the U.S. Treasury), and the use of those funds by the grantee to pay for grant related expenses.
E-11. Must an eligible applicant's proposal include a plan to implement one of the four school intervention models\(^1\) in the proposed target school?

As described in Absolute Priority 1 of the notice, all eligible applicants must partner with at least one target school that is either a persistently lowest-achieving school or a low-performing school (as described in the notice). An applicant that partners with a target school that is a **persistently lowest-achieving school** must plan to implement one of the four school intervention models (turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model). An applicant that partners with a target school that is a **low-performing school that is not also a persistently lowest-achieving school** must implement ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive interventions to assist, augment, or replace the school, which may include implementing one of the four school intervention models, or may include another model of sufficient ambition, rigor, and comprehensiveness to significantly improve academic and other outcomes for students, with elements that address the effectiveness of teachers and leaders and the school’s use of time and resources, including increased learning time (as defined in the notice).

E-12. What is the project period for grants awarded for the FY 2016 competition?

We anticipate that the project period will begin January 1, 2017, and will end 3-5 years later depending on the applicant's request, demonstration of substantial progress, and availability of funds.

E-13 Does the Department endorse specific solutions or tools to be used by Promise Neighborhoods applicants or grantees?

Promise Neighborhoods applicants and grantees are best positioned to determine the solutions and tools they need to meet the goals of their project, consistent with the requirements of the Notices Inviting Applications. The Department does not endorse or require Promise Neighborhood grantees to use the services of any particular organization. Grantees, in all cases where grant funds are used to pay a vendor for goods or services used in carrying out a grant, must follow the applicable procurement procedures in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). These requirements, for nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education, are set out at 2 CFR 200.317-200.326.

F. Data Collection and Reporting

F-1. What demographic data must an applicant provide in its application in describing the geographic area it intends to serve?

Applicants must describe the geographically defined area they propose to serve. This description must include an explanation of the level of distress present in the area based on (1) indicators of need (education and family and community support) as defined in the notice, and (2) other relevant indicators.

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\(^1\) The four school intervention models are the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and transformation model described in Appendix C of the Race to the Top Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for FY 2010, 74 FR 59836, 59866 (November 18, 2009)
F-2. **What measures should applicants consider to assess the learning and development of three-year-olds?**

The Department expects applicants to propose using developmentally appropriate early learning measures (as defined in the notice) at the beginning of the program or school year to ensure that young children meet developmental milestones for age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning (as defined in the notice).

These measures may be part of a coordinated system of assessments and strategies intended to collect information about the process and context of young children’s learning and development in order to make informed instructional and programmatic decisions. Such systems include appropriate screening, diagnostic, formative, and observational measures and make use of relevant descriptive data.

Such instruments may be appropriate for use with three-year-olds if they meet the definition of developmentally appropriate early learning measures for multiple domains of early learning and fit within the context of a comprehensive assessment system.

F-3. **Are applicants responsible for selecting the national evaluator? What must an applicant do with respect to the national evaluation?**

The Department will select the national evaluator. Applicants must commit to working with the Department, and with the national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods or another entity designated by the Department, to ensure that data collection practices and program designs are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees.

F-4. **Must an eligible applicant conduct a needs assessment and segmentation analysis prior to submitting a planning grant application?**

No. In its planning grant application, an eligible applicant should describe the education indicators and family and community support indicators that it will use in conducting a needs assessment and segmentation analysis during the planning year.

F-7. **Is an eligible applicant required to describe how it will make data, other than school-based data, accessible to others?**

Yes, applicants are required to plan, build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that must include information for program and project indicators (as defined in the notice), some of which will be data obtained from outside of school (e.g., home access to broadband internet). The applicant must identify how it will link the longitudinal data system to school-based, LEA, and State data systems; and make the data accessible to parents, families, community residents, program partners, researchers, and evaluators while abiding by Federal, State, and other privacy laws and requirements.
G. Allowable Activities

G-1. May an applicant propose to serve adults in the Promise Neighborhood?

Yes; however, applicants must explain in their applications how the services for adults directly align with improved academic and family and community support results for children. Examples of such services include, but are not limited to, family literacy programs and other training for community members to support student learning.

G-2. Does the definition of “increased learning time” include before- or after-school instructional programs?

Yes. Extending learning into before- and after-school hours can be difficult to implement effectively, but before- or after-school instructional programs may be included under the definition of “increased learning time.” If an applicant proposes to offer these programs to children in the proposed Promise Neighborhood, we encourage the applicant to plan to closely integrate and coordinate academic work that takes place during regular school hours and academic work that occurs before or after regular school hours.

G-3. Should applicants include expenses related to the national evaluation in their budgets?

No. Applicants are not expected to include expenses related to the national evaluation in their budgets. The Department will pay those expenses separately. However, applications are expected to include in their budget data collection expenses related to the needs assessment, segmentation analysis, and other data collection management activities as expenses. Applicants may also include expenses for their own evaluation activities.

G-4. How does an eligible applicant determine what expenditures are allowable and what expenditures are prohibited?

The budget an eligible applicant includes in its application should include only costs that are reasonable and necessary for carrying out the objectives of the proposed Promise Neighborhoods implementation grant. Rules about allowable costs can be found at Subpart E of 2 CFR Part (see http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=a621140210b0eb5108ac8a1c4da4d07c&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.e&rgn=div6).

G-5. May an eligible applicant propose to work with a local evaluator in addition to cooperating with the national evaluator?

Yes. The Department has not set any restrictions or requirements regarding work with local evaluators.
G-6. **May Promise Neighborhoods grant funds be used to pay for construction or to purchase real property?**

No. Promise Neighborhoods grants cannot be used to pay for construction or the acquisition of real property. For additional information on this topic, see 34 CFR 75.533 of EDGAR, which can be viewed at [http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.pdf).

G-7. **What is the difference between direct costs and indirect costs?**

As described at 2 CFR 200.413(a), direct costs are those that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective.

Indirect costs, by contrast, are those (a) incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and (b) not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

For the full text of 2 CFR Part 200, which applies to all Department grantees, can be found at: [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=a621140210b0eb5108ac8a1c4da4d07c&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=a621140210b0eb5108ac8a1c4da4d07c&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML).

G-8. **May an applicant include indirect costs in its budget request?**

Yes. The amount of indirect costs, if an applicant chooses to request them, should be noted on line 10 of Section A of ED Standard Form 524, which is included in the Promise Neighborhoods application package. In addition, as described in the application package, applicants requesting reimbursement for indirect costs should specify in their budget narrative (a) the estimated amount of the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied, (b) the total indirect expense, (c) which costs are included as indirect costs, and (d) which costs are excluded from the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied.

G-9. **What must a grantee do in order to claim indirect costs under its Promise Neighborhoods grant?**

Under 34 CFR 75.560(b), a grantee, if it has not already done so, must obtain a current indirect cost rate from its cognizant Federal agency in order to charge those costs to its grant. The cognizant Federal agency is generally the Federal department or agency providing the grantee with the most Federal funding subject to indirect cost support (or an agency otherwise designated by OMB). (See 34 CFR 75.561.)

For additional information about obtaining an approved indirect cost rate or applying for an indirect cost rate, you may contact a cost negotiator using the information provided at the following link: [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgreps.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgreps.html).

G-9. **May a grantee that does not yet have an approved indirect cost rate charge indirect costs to its grant?**
A grantee that does not have a federally recognized indirect cost rate agreement may charge its grant for indirect costs at a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted direct salaries and wages. See 34 CFR 75.560(c). However, a grantee that does not submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant Federal agency within 90 days of receiving its Promise Neighborhood grant award notification, will not be allowed—absent exceptional circumstances as determined by the Department—to charge indirect costs to its i3 grant until it obtains a federally recognized indirect cost agreement. See 34 CFR 75.560(c).) In addition, under 2 CFR 200.414, certain grantees that have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. We will be providing additional guidance on the de minimis rate at a later time.

G-10. If, at the time it receives its Promise Neighborhoods grant award, a grantee does not have an indirect cost agreement with its cognizant Federal agency; must it submit its indirect cost proposal to its cognizant Federal agency within a certain timeframe?

Yes. A grantee that does not have an indirect cost agreement must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant Federal agency within 90 days of receiving its grant award notification. 34 CFR 75.560(b).

G-11. May a grantee that does not yet have an approved indirect cost rate charge indirect costs to its grant?

A grantee that does not have a federally recognized indirect cost rate agreement may charge its grant for indirect costs at a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted direct salaries and wages. 34 CFR 75.560(c). However, a grantee that does not submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant Federal agency within 90 days of receiving its grant award notification, will not be allowed—absent exceptional circumstances as determined by the Department—to charge indirect costs to its Promise Neighborhoods grant until it obtains a federally recognized indirect cost agreement. 34 CFR 75.560(d).

G-12. Is the Promise Neighborhoods grant competition subject to a restricted indirect cost rate?

No, there is not a restricted indirect cost rate for the Promise Neighborhoods grant competition.

G-13. May a Promise Neighborhoods grantee use its grant funds to make subgrants to other entities?

No. The authorizing statute for the Promise Neighborhoods program, sections 5411 through 5413 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, does not authorize subgrants. Consequently, grantees under the Promise Neighborhoods program will not be able to use grant funds to make subgrants to other entities (see 34 CFR 75.708). In all cases in which a grantee needs to pay another party for goods and services to carry out its grant, the grantee must follow the applicable procurement procedures in EDGAR. Nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education must follow the procurement procedures in 2 CFR 200.317-200.326.

G-14. Should an applicant include a budget for each year of the proposed project?

Yes, the application should include a separate budget for each year of the grant period.
H. Future Competitions

H-1. Will previous Promise Neighborhoods planning grantees automatically receive this grant or any priority in this competition?

No. Previous planning and implementation grantees will compete for this grant alongside applicants who did not compete for or receive a planning or implementation grant.

H-2. If an applicant is unsuccessful in its first Promise Neighborhoods grant competition, may the applicant apply for another Promise Neighborhoods grant at a later date?

Yes. In subsequent years and contingent on the availability of funds, the Department intends to conduct further competitions for the Promise Neighborhoods program. So long as an applicant meets the eligibility requirements, the applicant may apply for a grant in a subsequent competition. In Fiscal Year 2017, and beyond, Promise Neighborhood grant competitions will be held under the authorizing statute set out in Section 4624 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act, P.L. 114-95.

For more FAQs about funding and eligibility requirements, see B: Eligible Applicants and Partners.
I. Matching Requirement

I-1. What are the matching requirements for this grant?

To be eligible for this grant, an applicant must demonstrate that it has established a commitment from one or more entities in the public or private sector, which may include Federal, State, and local public agencies, philanthropic organizations, private businesses, or individuals, to provide matching funds for the implementation process. An applicant must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations equal to at least 100 percent of its grant award, except that an applicant proposing a project that meets Absolute Priority 2: Promise Neighborhoods in Rural Communities or Absolute Priority 3: Promise Neighborhoods in Tribal Communities must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations equal to at least 50 percent of the grant award. At least 10 percent of an applicant’s total match must be cash or in-kind contributions from the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, private businesses, or individuals.

I-2. Are Federal funds an eligible source of match?

Federal agency contributions can be used to meet the match. Federal funds may count toward the required match so long as: (a) these funds are reallocated in support of Promise Neighborhoods activities, (b) the eligible applicant can provide appropriate evidence of this commitment; and (c) these funds are expended or used during the grant period.

I-3. Is an eligible applicant required to have its matching funds in hand before submitting its application?

An applicant must provide evidence that funds or in-kind contributions have been committed at the time it submits its application. These funds or in-kind contributions need not be in hand. As evidence that funds or in-kind contributions have been committed, an applicant must submit a scanned letter or letters in its application explaining the type and quantity of the match commitment. The scanned letter or letters must include original signatures from the executives of organizations or agencies providing the match. In the case of an in-kind contribution, the letter or letters must include a description of how the value was determined for the donated or contributed goods or service.

I-4. What kinds of in-kind contributions may be used to meet the matching requirement?

The Department’s regulations on matching funds, including in-kind contributions, are set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, which can be viewed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=a621140210b0eb5108ac8a1c4da4d07c&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML

I-5. Must an eligible entity that proposes to serve a tribal community in a non-rural area secure a match commitment of 25% or 50% of its grant award?
An eligible organization that meets the requirements for Absolute Priority 3 (Promise Neighborhoods in Tribal Communities) must secure a match commitment or in-kind donation of at least 50% of its grant award, regardless of the geographic area in which the tribal community it proposes to serve is located. At least 10 percent of an applicant’s total match, including match from organizations that meet the requirements for Absolute Priority 3, must be cash or in-kind contributions from the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, private businesses, or individuals.

I-6. May eligible applicants commit their own funds or in-kind contributions as part of the matching requirement?

Yes. Eligible applicants may commit their own funds or in-kind contributions to meet the matching requirement, so long as the funds or in-kind contributions in question: (a) are spent or used during the project period, and (b) are used for purposes within the scope of the approved application. The eligible applicant must provide appropriate evidence of the commitment of its own resources in its application.

I-7. Is there a limit on the amount of in-kind donations an eligible applicant may count toward the matching requirement?

An eligible applicant may meet the matching requirement using funds or in-kind donations and is not limited in the amount of in-kind donations it may count toward the matching requirement. At least 10 percent of an applicant’s total match, however, must be cash or in-kind contributions from the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, private businesses, or individuals.

I-8. May an eligible applicant count toward the matching requirement funds or in-kind donations expended or used prior to receipt of a Promise Neighborhoods grant?

No. In order to count toward the matching requirement, funds or in-kind donations must be expended or used during the grant period, which begins when the grant is awarded. However, an eligible applicant may count existing funds or in-kind contributions toward the required match so long as: (a) these funds or in-kind contributions are reallocated in support of Promise Neighborhoods activities, (b) the eligible applicant can provide appropriate evidence of this commitment; and (c) these funds or in-kind contributions are expended or used during the grant period.

I-9. May volunteer services count toward the matching requirement?

Yes. Volunteer services may count as an in-kind contribution under EDGAR. 2 CFR 200.306(e) and (f) provide:

(e) Volunteer services furnished by third-party professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor may be counted as cost sharing or matching if the service is an integral and necessary part of an approved project or program. Rates for third-party volunteer services must be consistent with those paid for similar work by the non-Federal entity. In those instances in which the required skills are not found in the non-Federal entity, rates must be consistent with those paid for similar work in the labor market in which the non-Federal entity competes for the kind of services involved. In
(f) When a third-party organization furnishes the services of an employee, these services must be valued at the employee’s regular rate of pay plus an amount of fringe benefits that is reasonable, necessary, allocable, and otherwise allowable, and indirect costs at either the third-party organization’s approved federally negotiated indirect cost rate or, a rate in accordance with §200.414 Indirect (F&A) costs, paragraph (d), provided these services employ the same skill(s) for which the employee is normally paid. Where donated services are treated as indirect costs, indirect cost rates will separate the value of the donated services so that reimbursement for the donated services will not be made.

I-11. May a grantee use unrecovered indirect costs, i.e., indirect costs that a grantee could have claimed but did not claim under its Promise Neighborhoods grant, to meet the matching requirement?

No. The Department will not approve the use of unrecovered indirect costs to meet the matching requirement under the Promise Neighborhoods program. See 2 CFR 200.306(c).

I-12. Under what circumstances will the Secretary reduce the match requirement?

The Secretary 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. The Secretary’s decision to decrease the match amount will depend on the individual facts presented in an eligible applicant’s request.

I-13. May current grantees accept match donations for future competitions?

Yes, an organization may receive contributions and letters of support that document the contributions as long as the commitment is in hand when the application is submitted.

I-14. What is the difference between information provided by applicants regarding partners’ financial commitments in the memorandum of understanding (Absolute Priority 1) and evidence of the matching requirement (Eligibility Information)?

Partners’ financial commitments, described in the memorandum of understanding, must summarize the amount of funds that each partner intends to provide to support the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Providing evidence of fulfilling the matching requirement includes identifying the source of the funds or contributions and, in the case of a third-party in-kind contribution, providing a description of how the value was determined for the donated or contributed goods or service. Evidence of the required match
must also include a commitment letter signed by the executive(s) of the organizations or agencies that will provide the match. This letter must provide a description of the type and quantity of the match commitment.
J. Selection Criteria

J-1. Will preference be given to solutions that are based on evidence from a particular source or database?

No, preference will not be given to solutions that are based on evidence from any specific source. Peer reviewers will consider the extent to which an applicant describes proposed solutions that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence (both as described in the notice). See selection criterion, “Quality of Project Services.”

J-2. What are examples of strong and moderate evidence?

As defined in the notice, strong evidence means evidence from studies with designs that can support causal conclusions (i.e., studies with high internal validity), and studies that, in total, include enough of the range of participants and settings to support scaling up to the State, regional, or national level (i.e., studies with high external validity). The following are examples of strong evidence: (1) More than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study or well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program; or (2) one large, well-designed and well-implemented (as defined in this notice) randomized controlled, multisite trial that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program.

As defined in the notice, moderate evidence means evidence from previous studies whose designs can support causal conclusions (i.e., studies with high internal validity) but have limited generalizability (i.e., moderate external validity), or studies with high external validity but moderate internal validity. The following would constitute moderate evidence: (1) At least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study supporting the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program, with small sample sizes or other conditions of analysis that limit generalizability; (2) at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study that does not demonstrate equivalence between the intervention and comparison groups at program entry but that has no other major flaws related to internal validity; or (3) correlational research with strong statistical controls for selection bias and for discerning the influence of internal factor.

See descriptions of related terms below:

Carefully matched comparison group design means a type of quasi-experimental study that attempts to approximate an experimental study. More specifically, it is a design in which project participants are matched with non-participants based on key characteristics that are thought to be related to the outcome. These characteristics include, but are not limited to: (1) Prior test scores and other measures of academic achievement (preferably, the same measures that the study will use to evaluate outcomes for the two groups); (2) demographic characteristics, such as age, disability, gender, English proficiency, ethnicity, poverty level, parents’ educational attainment, and single- or two-parent family background; (3) the time period in which the two groups are studied (e.g., the two groups are children entering kindergarten in the same year as opposed to sequential years); and (4) methods used to collect outcome data (e.g., the same test of reading skills administered in the same way to both groups).

Experimental study means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to participate in a project being evaluated (treatment group) or not to
participate in the project (control group). The effect of the project is the average difference in outcomes between the treatment and control groups.

Interrupted time series design\(^2\) means a type of quasi-experimental study in which the outcome of interest is measured multiple times before and after the treatment for program participants only. If the program had an impact, the outcomes after treatment will have a different slope or level from those before treatment. That is, the series should show an “interruption” of the prior situation at the time when the program was implemented. Adding a comparison group time series, such as schools not participating in the program or schools participating in the program in a different geographic area, substantially increases the reliability of the findings.

Quasi-experimental study means an evaluation design that attempts to approximate an experimental design and can support causal conclusions (i.e., minimizes threats to internal validity, such as selection bias, or allows them to be modeled). Well-designed quasi-experimental studies include carefully matched comparison group designs, interrupted time series designs, or regression discontinuity designs.

Regression discontinuity design study means, in part, a quasi-experimental study design that closely approximates an experimental study. In a regression discontinuity design, participants are assigned to a treatment or comparison group based on a numerical rating or score of a variable unrelated to the treatment such as the rating of an application for funding. Another example would be assignment of eligible students, teachers, classrooms, or schools above a certain score (“cut score”) to the treatment group and assignment of those below the score to the comparison group.


\(^2\) A single subject or single case design is an adaptation of an interrupted time series design that relies on the comparison of treatment effects on a single subject or group of single subjects. There is little confidence that findings based on this design would be the same for other members of the population. In some single subject designs, treatment reversal or multiple baseline designs are used to increase internal validity. In a treatment reversal design, after a pretreatment or baseline outcome measurement is compared with a post treatment measure, the treatment would then be stopped for a period of time; a second baseline measure of the outcome would be taken, followed by a second application of the treatment or a different treatment. A multiple baseline design addresses concerns about the effects of normal development, timing of the treatment, and amount of the treatment with treatment-reversal designs by using a varying time schedule for introduction of the treatment and/or treatments of different lengths or intensity.
K. Application Process

K-1. Must applications be submitted electronically?

Yes. Applications for Promise Neighborhoods grants must be submitted electronically using grants.gov which is accessible at www.grants.gov. An application will be rejected if it is submitted in paper format unless, as described in the notice and the application package, the applicant qualifies for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submits, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that it qualifies for one of these exceptions. More detailed instructions regarding the electronic submission of applications are in the notice and the application package. Applicants are advised to become familiar with the grants.gov website and the electronic submission process well in advance of the application deadline.

We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. The time it takes to upload the narratives for your application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the files and the speed of your Internet connection. If you try to submit your application after 4:30:00 PM on the deadline date, the grants.gov system will not accept it.

K-2. May an applicant that did not submit a “notice of intent to apply” still apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant?

Yes. Submitting a “notice of intent to apply” is not required, and entities that do not submit one may still apply for funding. In addition, an entity that does submit a “notice of intent to apply” is not obligated to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant, nor is it bound to the information in its “notice of intent to apply.”

K-3. Should applicants submit a separate memorandum of understanding for each partner, or a single memorandum of understanding that includes all partners?

Applicants should submit a single memorandum of understanding that includes all partners. The memorandum of understanding should include the information listed in Absolute Priority 1, part 4, (c)(i)-(iv) of the notice. This recommended page limit is no more than ten pages in length.

K-4. How should applicants organize their project narrative?

The Department strongly recommends that applicants include a table of contents for their project narrative and address each of the selection criteria in the order in which they are described in the notice. After addressing the selection criteria, applicants may address the competitive and invitational priorities, if applicable.
K-5. **What are the page limits for the project narrative and the memorandum of understanding? Are these page limits required or recommended?**

The page limit for the grant project narrative is 75 pages double-spaced, which includes the table of contents. This page limit is strongly encouraged, but not required.

The page limit for the memorandum of understanding is 10 pages double-spaced. This page limit is also recommended, but not required. For additional information, see K-3.

K-6. **Must all eligible applicants provide a DUNS number on the ED Standard Form 424, question 8(c)?**

Yes, all Federal grant applicants must provide a DUNS number on ED Standard Form 424. A DUNS number is a unique 9-digit number that identifies the organization. Check with your fiscal office to see if your organization already has a DUNS number. If your organization does not have a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1-888-814-1435 or [http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/index.html](http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/index.html).

K-7. **Must a Promise Neighborhoods grant application be approved by State officials before it is submitted to the Department?**

No; however, Promise Neighborhoods applications are subject to intergovernmental review after submission. For additional information about the regulations pertaining to Intergovernmental Review, applicants can refer to the application package and to 34 CFR Part 79 of EDGAR, which can be viewed [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=393301a7cdccca1ea71f18aae51824e7&node=34:1.1.1.1.25&rgn=div5#se34.1.79_110](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=393301a7cdccca1ea71f18aae51824e7&node=34:1.1.1.1.25&rgn=div5#se34.1.79_110). In addition, all eligible applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with such entities as an LEA; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and providers of family and community supports.

K-8. **Are applicants required to respond to question 14 (Areas Affected by Project) on ED Standard Form 424?**

No. Question 14 on ED Standard Form 424 is optional, and applicants may leave it blank. Applicants are required to describe the geographic area that they propose to serve in the Project Narrative.

K-9. **When is the project start date for projects receiving Promise Neighborhoods grant funds (ED Standard Form 424)?**

Grantees have discretion in determining the date to begin their projects, but the project period for all Promise Neighborhoods grants officially begins on the date a grant is awarded. Because an exact award date has not yet been determined, applicants may enter January 1, 2017 as the start date on the ED Standard Form 424.

K-10. **Can the Department provide any guidance on ED Standard Form 424?**

Promise Neighborhoods is subject to Executive Order 12372 and 34 CFR part 79, which allow States that have chosen to participate in the intergovernmental review process the opportunity to review and comment on applications submitted to the Department for funding. Question 19 on ED Standard Form
424 requires an applicant to indicate if its State is participating in the intergovernmental review process under Executive Order 12372. A list of States that have chosen to participate in the intergovernmental review process is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/.

K-11. **Has the Department established any guidance regarding the Appendix (Other, if applicable)?**

The Department has not established any specific guidance for the Appendix. An applicant may upload any other documents or materials that it feels are necessary to support its application. However, applicants are strongly encouraged not to include lengthy documents.

K-12. **Is there any competitive advantage for applicants to exceed or stay within the recommended page limit for the project narrative?**

No. Peer reviewers will consider the extent to which applicants address the selection criteria without consideration for the length of the application. The length of the application is not a factor in any of the criteria. Therefore, applicants should prepare an application that addresses the selection criteria in the most appropriate way given the nature of their proposal and unique circumstances.

K-13. **Is the “Application Filing Name” in Grants.gov the same as the eligible organization’s name? (FY 2016) application?**

Yes, the application filing name in Grants.gov is the same as the eligible organization’s name.