



Second Round Promise Zone Application Guide: Rural/Tribal Application Overview

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The Promise Zones initiative seeks to revitalize high-poverty communities across the country by creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving educational opportunities, reducing serious and violent crime, leveraging private capital, and assisting local leaders in navigating federal programs and cutting through red tape. This is the application guide for rural and tribal Promise Zones. The urban application guide is located at <http://www.hud.gov/promisezones/>.

The Promise Zone designation partners the Federal Government with local leaders who are addressing multiple community revitalization challenges in a collaborative way and have demonstrated a commitment to results. Further, Promise Zones will be assigned federal staff to help navigate the array of federal assistance and programs already available to them. In addition, eligible applicants in Promise Zones will receive any available (a) preference for certain competitive federal programs and (b) technical assistance. Subject to enactment by Congress, businesses investing in Promise Zones or hiring residents of Promise Zones will be eligible to receive tax incentives. Altogether, this package of assistance will help local leaders accelerate efforts to revitalize their communities.

The Promise Zone designation will be for a term of 10 years, and may be extended as necessary to capture the full term of availability of the Promise Zones tax incentives, pending the enactment of tax incentives by Congress. During this term, the specific benefits made available to Promise Zones will vary from year to year, and sometimes more often than annually, due to changes in agency policies and changes in appropriations and authorizations for relevant programs. All assistance provided to Promise Zones is subject to applicable regulations, statutes, and changes in federal agency policies, appropriations, and authorizations for relevant programs. Subject to these limitations, the Promise Zone designation commits the Federal Government to partner with local leaders who are addressing multiple community revitalization challenges in a collaborative way and have demonstrated a commitment to results.

Applications must provide a clear description of how the Promise Zone designation would accelerate and strengthen the community's efforts at comprehensive community revitalization. Applications must provide clearly labeled sections:

- *Required:* Abstract information including an Executive Summary and the Goals and Activities Template (see Appendix), entered on www.Max.gov.
- *Required:* Mapping tool data sheet, automatically generated for applicant when using the Promise Zone mapping tool.

Required: One narrative attachment of not more than 25 total pages (Calibri font, 12 point, double-spaced and one inch margins) that includes the most important information for purposes of Promise Zone selection. Any pages beyond this limit will not



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be reviewed. USDA will not consider the information on any excess pages, which may result in a lower score.

- *Additional documentation:* Additional materials of not more than 35 pages included as attachments, including Letters of Support, a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) [described on page 19] and additional maps. Applicants are encouraged not to restate commitments made in the MOU in additional Letters of Support. Where feasible, provide other information in summaries or pull most relevant text, charts, and graphs instead of including large documents. Any pages beyond this limit will not be reviewed. USDA will not consider the information on any excess pages, which may result in a lower score.

Note: The narrative and Promise Zone Goals and Activities Template (see Appendix) will be the main sources of information used for scoring the application.

All lead organizations of designated Promise Zones, implementation partner organizations in the Promise Zone strategies, and any federal grantees whose federally funded work contributes to Promise Zone strategies will be required to participate in evaluations of Promise Zones and related federal grant activities that may be conducted. Lead organizations, implementation partners, and federal grantees contributing to Promise Zones must agree to work with evaluators designated by participating federal agencies, as specified in their respective grant agreements, regulations and other requirements. Guidance on evaluation and data points will be forthcoming. For Promise Zone lead organizations and implementing partners, this may include providing access to program personnel and all relevant programmatic and administrative data, as specified by the evaluator(s) under the direction of a federal agency, as legally attainable, during the term of the Promise Zone designation and/or grant agreement. (See pages 20 and 21 for definitions of lead organization and implementation partner organizations.)

Second Round Promise Zone Designation Process

The second round of Promise Zone designations will be made pursuant to this document. A total of 20 Promise Zone designations will be made by the end of the calendar year 2016. Three urban, one rural, and one tribal community were designated in January of 2014. As a result of this competition, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intends to designate six urban communities and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) intends to designate at least one rural and at least one tribal community. Competitions for the remaining round of designations will commence in calendar year 2015.

Applications for Promise Zone designations will be reviewed by representatives from USDA, HUD, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and



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Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Transportation. Additional federal agencies and outside entities may contribute reviewers, depending upon the anticipated volume of applications.

Only one Promise Zone application may be submitted in association with a Unit of General Local Government¹ (UGLG) or tribal area per application cycle. If more than one application is submitted for a Promise Zone meeting the qualifying criteria, the one submitted with local government support will be accepted. If more than one application is submitted with local government support in association with a UGLG or tribal area, including applications that cross jurisdictional lines, all of the applications from that UGLG or tribal area will be disqualified for the current application cycle. If a Promise Zone designated in Round 1 is located within a UGLG or tribal area in which a new application is being made, the applicant is directed to include an explanation of how, if a second Promise Zone designation is made, the UGLG or tribal area plans to work with all of the Promise Zone designees at the same time and sustain the level of effort, resources, and support committed to each Promise Zone under its respective Promise Zone Plan for the full term of each designation. This explanation should be evidenced by commitments from the UGLG or tribal area in materials submitted by local officials in support of the application.

Reviewers will first verify that the application is submitted by a community eligible for selection, by verifying that the proposed Promise Zone meets the qualifying criteria and that the Lead Applicant meets the eligibility criteria for the second round selection process (see pages 6-8 for eligibility and qualifying criteria).²

After verifying for each application that the Lead Applicant is eligible and the proposed Promise Zone would qualify, the reviewers will score the applications according to the points assigned to selection criteria shown in the *Application Guide* for the appropriate Promise Zones category (urban, rural or tribal).

In addition to the application materials, reviewers may consider public information available from participating agency records, the name check review, public sources such as newspapers, Inspector General or Government Accountability Office reports or findings. Any evidence cited in the Goals or Activities Template may also be reviewed.

Rural applications will be ranked against other rural applications, tribal applications will be ranked against other tribal applications, and urban applications will be ranked against other urban applications. An application must score a total of 75 points or more out of 100 points to

¹ Unit of general local government as defined in section 102(a)(1) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302(a)(1)). [See definition \(a\) \(1\) Unit of General Local Government.](#)

² Lead Applicants are not required to be a recipient of a previous federal grant.



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be considered for a designation (scoring 75 points or more means that applicants fall within the “competitive range”). Once scored, applications will be ranked competitively within each of the three Promise Zones categories.

The Promise Zones initiative will provide communities and the Federal Government with the opportunity to demonstrate and accelerate the impact of coordinated federal investment in communities in which stakeholders have come together with a focus on results. The participating federal agencies seek to establish a diverse cohort of quality designees in order to demonstrate strategies that may be useful for communities working on comprehensive revitalization in many contexts nationwide. Therefore the agencies may select a lower ranked application over a higher ranked application, from among those scoring 75 points or more overall, for purposes of establishing geographic diversity.

Promise Zone Finalists

The participating federal agencies may also choose to name some applicants as Promise Zone Finalists as a result of this selection process. The purpose of selecting Promise Zone Finalists will be to recognize communities whose applications reflect high-quality strategies under the criteria set forth in the *Application Guide*, but are not selected as Promise Zone designees. The participating federal agencies will seek to expand national knowledge about Promise Zone Finalist communities and their revitalization strategies by posting information submitted in the Finalists' applications on agency websites. Participating federal agencies will communicate regularly with Finalists about opportunities for relevant funding or technical assistance that may become available, although no preference points or other Promise Zone designation advantages will be awarded as a result of Finalist status. Promise Zone Finalists will not be precluded from applying for Promise Zone designation in a possible future round of the Promise Zones initiative.

Application Submission Instructions and Deadline

A non-binding Letter of Intent to apply is due by October 17, 2014. The Letter of Intent should include the Lead Applicant organization and tentative geography of the proposed Promise Zone.

Electronic copies of application materials must be received by 5:00 p.m. on November 21, 2014 via Max.gov. You must complete the letter of intent/request for application form to access the application on www.Max.gov. Once the form is submitted, the applicant will receive an individualized, tokenized link to access the Promise Zone application no later than by the next business day. Additional information or substantive or technical corrections will not be accepted or considered after the application deadline. Application materials must follow the formats,



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page limits and other requirements set forth in the Promise Zones *Second Round Application Guide* as appropriate, including using Calibri font, 12 point, double-spaced and one-inch margins for narrative attachments.

Applicants who are unable to submit their applications via max.gov must submit a request by email to PromiseZones@HUD.gov and make alternative arrangements by October 17, 2014. An applicant demonstrating good cause may request a waiver from the requirement for electronic submission. If you receive a waiver, your paper application must be received by HUD before the deadline of this application. Applicants requesting a waiver should submit their waiver requests via e-mail to PromiseZones@HUD.gov. The subject line must contain the name of the applicant and "Request for Waiver to Electronic Application for Promise Zones." Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and approvals or rejections for alternative submission will be sent by October 31, 2014 from the appropriate designating agency.

To the extent that application components require resolutions, approvals or other actions by local governing boards, legislative bodies, tribal councils, regulatory bodies or other entities with fixed schedules for consideration of such actions, and such actions cannot be taken prior to the application deadline, applicants must submit the following information by the application deadline: description of the action to be taken, date on which the action is expected, and information necessary to demonstrate its relevance to the proposal. Depending upon the importance of such actions to a selected applicant's Promise Zone strategy, the participating federal agencies may make the Promise Zone designation contingent upon the receipt of evidence that the action has been taken.

Notifications of Decisions

Notification of decisions will be made by letter.



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Section I – Lead Applicant Eligibility

APPLICATION

Section I – Lead Applicant Eligibility

Due to the nature of the initiative, Promise Zone activities are likely to be carried out by a variety of organizations and organization types. Eligible Lead Applicant/ Lead Organization for rural and tribal Promise Zone designations are:

- 1) Local governments (which includes county, city, town, township, parish, village, governmental authority or other general-purpose political subdivision of a state or any combination thereof) and Federally-recognized tribes;³
- 2) Nonprofit organizations⁴ applying in partnership with local or tribal government;
- 3) Public Housing Agency⁵ applying in partnership with local government, or Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) applying in partnership with tribal government;
- 4) Local Education Agencies (LEAs)⁶ applying in partnership with local or tribal government; or
- 5) Community colleges applying in partnership with local or tribal government.

The abstract will serve as a summary of key application information and must clearly identify one Lead Applicant organization, staff point(s) of contact and provide the email and telephone contact information of the Lead Applicant. The abstract must also: identify the application category (urban, rural or tribal); identify the implementation partners and local official support; describe the geography and provide the economic and population data provided from the mapping tool data sheet.

Lead Applicants/ Lead Organizations must select whether they are applying for rural or tribal Promise Zone designation.

Note: See Definitions for Lead Applicant, page 20.

³ “Tribal applicants” are: Federally-recognized tribes as well as duly established political subdivisions of a Federally-recognized tribe. A “Federally-recognized tribe” is any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community of Indians, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act [43 USCS §§ 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 pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.) A Non-profit organization applying in partnership with a Federally-recognized tribal government may apply as a tribal applicant.

⁴ Including Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS) and Community Action Agencies (CAA). See Definitions for Nonprofits, page 20.

⁵ See Definition for Public Housing Agency, page 20.

⁶ See Definitions for LEA, page 20.



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Note: Only one Promise Zone application may be submitted in association with the same Unit of General Local Government (UGLG) or tribal area per application cycle. If more than one application is submitted for a Promise Zone meeting the qualifying criteria, the one submitted with local government support will be accepted. If more than one application is submitted with local government support in association with a UGLG or tribal area, including applications that cross jurisdictional lines, all of the applications with support from that UGLG or tribal area will be disqualified for the application cycle.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) Abstract to be completed on www.Max.gov.
- 2) An Executive Summary that describes the Promise Zone plan, including (1) a brief description of the needs and assets of the proposed Promise Zone; (2) the goals of the Promise Zone; (3) activities to achieve goals; (4) the Lead Applicant's capacity to achieve results; and (5) how the Promise Zone designation would accelerate or strengthen existing efforts at comprehensive community revitalization. Submit via www.Max.gov with a 2,000 character limit.

Section II – Qualifying Criteria

All of the following must be present in an application for a proposed Promise Zone to be eligible for designation:

- 1) Rural and tribal Promise Zones must encompass one or more census tract(s) across a contiguous⁷ geography. Rural applicants can define their boundaries by either census tracts or by county, where multiple counties are included. Tribal applicants can define boundaries which may encompass: one or more census tracts and nearby tribally-controlled areas; or reservations; or consortia of tribal and non-tribal jurisdictions.
- 2) Promise Zone boundaries must encompass a population of no more than 200,000 residents.⁸ The population limit of 200,000 may not include any incorporated municipalities or unincorporated areas with individual populations greater than 50,000. Rural and tribal Promise Zones may fall in non-metro and metro counties.

⁷ Promise Zone boundaries that cross state lines and water borders can be considered contiguous.

⁸ The population limit of 200,000 is intended to allow for regional collaboration among multiple communities of varying sizes and capacities. The rural eligibility criteria ensure, by definition, that rural Promise Zone applications cannot include communities over 50,000.



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- 3) The rate of overall poverty or Extremely Low Income rate (whichever is greater) of residents within the Promise Zone must be at or above 20 percent, and the Promise Zone must contain at least one census tract with a poverty rate at or above 30 percent.⁹
- 4) Local leadership must demonstrate commitment to the Promise Zone effort. Tribal

Proposed Promise Zone boundaries may cross UGLG or tribal area lines, but one Lead Applicant must be identified, and for cross-jurisdictional applications, commitment must be demonstrated by the leadership of all UGLGs or tribal areas involved.

Note: If the application does not meet all of these qualifying criteria, it will not be considered for designation as a Promise Zone.

The Promise Zone mapping tool is located at

<http://www.huduser.org/PZ2013/promiseZone.html>. The tool allows applicants to draw a boundary at the community-level and provides data, in the form of a PDF document sent to the user via email, on poverty level/Extremely Low Income rate (ELI), highest census tract poverty level, and population, as well as a map of the boundary.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) The PDF mapping tool data sheet to demonstrate poverty level and population levels. *The mapping tool PDF map and data sheet will not count toward 25 page narrative or 35 page additional materials page limits.*
- 2) Letter(s) demonstrating commitment from UGLG or tribal area leadership, including tribal resolutions for tribal applicants involved in the Promise Zone. For applications across UGLG or tribal area lines, commitment must be demonstrated by leadership of all UGLG or tribal areas involved.¹⁰ The letter(s) count toward the 35 page limit for additional documents.

Section III – Selection Criteria: Need (10 points)

⁹ Applicants are required to use the Promise Zones mapping tool to determine the overall poverty rate. The mapping tool determines the overall poverty rate in two ways and uses the higher percentage. See the Definitions section on page 20 for more information.

¹⁰ To the extent that application components require resolutions, approvals or other actions by governing boards, legislative bodies, tribal councils regulatory bodies or other entities with fixed schedules for consideration of such actions, and such actions cannot be taken prior to the application deadline, applicants must submit the following information by the application deadline: description of the action to be taken, date on which the action is expected, and information necessary to demonstrate its relevance to the proposal. Depending upon the importance of such actions to a selected applicant's Promise Zone Plan, the agencies may make the Promise Zone designation contingent upon the receipt of evidence that the action has been taken.



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The applicant's submission materials must contain the mapping tool data sheet and sufficient information to verify the following data within the boundaries of the proposed geographic area of the Promise Zone, to the greatest level of specificity possible using available data sources. Data will be compared with that submitted by other applicants in the applicant pool. Points will be awarded for:

- 1) Higher poverty rate/extremely low income rate – Concentration of households in poverty or with extremely low incomes (whichever is greater) residing within the proposed Promise Zone;
- 2) Lower employment rate – Employment rate for working-age adults within the Promise Zone; and
- 3) For rural applicants only: Higher Part I serious and violent crime rate – Rate of Part I serious and violent crimes within the Promise Zone.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) A narrative providing context for the three above data points within the proposed Promise Zone geographic area. The mapping tool used in Section II- Qualifying Criteria will provide data points for poverty and employment rates. It does not contain crime data. (See the Definitions section in the Appendix for information on how those data points are calculated. *Suggested 1 page limit.*

Note: Secondary sources or locally published data can be used to supplement the mapping tool, with justification of why supplemental data is necessary and attribution to the data source. If the Lead Applicant requests to use alternative data sources to meet the eligibility criteria or for the Need application section, a one-page explanation noting the alternative data source must be submitted along with the Promise Zone mapping tool data sheet to pzapplications@hud.gov with the subject line "Alternative data source request" by October 17, 2014 to be approved by the relevant designating agency. *Suggested 1 page limit.*

Note: For crime data, applicants must provide the total number of Uniform Crime Reporting Act (UCR)¹¹ Part I crime data per 1,000 people within the Promise Zones boundaries. Reviewers will calculate the rate based on the population submitted in the mapping tool. UCR data can be obtained from the local law enforcement agency and should cover the years 2011-2013. If your community is using the National Incident-Based Reporting System¹² (NIBRS), also include NIBRS data.

¹¹ Information on UCR data can be found at <http://www.bjs.gov/ucrdata/offenses.cfm>

¹² Information on NIBRS can be found at <http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/faqs.htm>



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Note: Though tribal crime data will not be considered in “Need” scoring, due to differing systems of reporting crime on tribal lands, tribal applicants may submit complimentary data to include the most recently produced statistics on tribal crime rates.

Section IV – Selection Criteria: Strategy (40 points)

Section IV – Part A: Needs and Assets Assessment (10 points)

Reviewers will assess the quality of applicant’s current assessment of the needs and assets of the proposed Promise Zone, including identified gaps in current community revitalization efforts and areas of opportunity.

Where relevant, the assessment should include breakdowns of indicators by specific subpopulations (including age, race, national origin, gender, and individuals in households where languages other than English are spoken) or specific geographic areas within the Promise Zone. The assessment should also include relevant information on education, barriers to employment, existing regional economic growth efforts and industries, areas of commercial blight, private economic activity, access to capital, transportation options and mobility and/or other characteristics.

€ Submit:

- 1)** A narrative summarizing needs and assets of the proposed Promise Zone community.
Suggested 2 page limit.

Note: If crime is a focus in the community’s plan, applicants should provide a break out of the number of incidences for each type of relevant Part I and Part II crime per 1,000 people that will be addressed as part of the Promise Zone Plan.

- 2)** Optional: Provide additional map(s), if relevant, that clearly labels: the proposed Promise Zone, and if applicable, the boundaries of other federal investments.
- 3)** Optional: Attachments providing detail on community needs and assets referenced in the narrative. *Attachments count toward the 35 page limit.*

Section IV- Part B: Promise Zone Plan (25 points)

Reviewers will assess the strength of the applicant’s plan for revitalizing the Promise Zone and addressing the Promise Zones initiative goals: creating jobs, increasing economic activity,



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improving educational opportunities, reducing serious and violent crime, and leveraging private capital.

Reviewers will rate all of the following factors:

- 1) Coherence of the overarching narrative of the Promise Zone Plan, including elements such as:
 - Extent to which the plan addresses synergies and potential conflicts among identified goals, including addressing connections among different policy areas;
 - Extent to which the plan articulates a rationale for setting priorities among different goals and activities, and if necessary, addresses the timing of implementation of specific goals and activities;
 - Extent to which the plan addresses activities of partners and non-partners doing work in the proposed Promise Zone or work that would have an effect on Promise Zone activities or success.
 - Extent to which the plan will contribute to or benefit from broader regional economic development, livability or revitalization efforts.
- 2) Responsiveness of the Promise Zone Plan to the gaps and opportunities identified in the assessment of needs and assets in Section IV – Part A;
- 3) Extent to which the Promise Zone Plan addresses factors such as:
 - The ability to manage, share, and use data for evaluation and continuous improvement toward each intended outcome. Plans to address challenges should be described. This should include describing any existing data sharing agreements, experience using technology to track metrics, and/or plans to promote access to data in a way that protects privacy, such as local data protections, informed consent procedures, staff training;
 - A system for accountability and measurement, for example, the plan and timeline for finalizing the set of intended
 - outcomes, metrics for measuring progress towards those outcomes, and timelines for when each metric will be measured and when milestones and outcomes will be achieved; and
 - Inclusion of specific goals and activities that address removing barriers and improving systems that impede delivery of services, such as changes in policies, delivery capacity, technology and program reporting including barriers related to cross-jurisdictional work, if applicable.

Note: For example, if improving transportation is a goal of the Promise Zone Plan, include specific efforts – planned or underway – to address infrastructure and flow in a



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way that will provide for more reliable and affordable transportation options. If job creation is a goal of the Promise Zone Plan, address how job-driven training for workers is addressed. Consider: how employers will identify the skills and credentials required for in-demand jobs and help develop training programs; how workers and job seekers will access education and training that meets their unique needs and the requirements for good jobs and careers; and how you will assist employers find workers who have or can acquire those skills.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) An overarching narrative of the Promise Zone Plan. The narrative should:
 - Describe the connections among each Promise Zone goal listed in the Goals and Activities Template, including both points of synergy and support as well as potential conflicts or tradeoffs. The narrative should explicitly address interconnections between different policy areas within the Promise Zone Plan and how the activities relate to regional revitalization efforts, if applicable.
 - Discuss the timing and sequencing of implementation of specific goals and activities.
 - Discuss how data, including operational outputs and outcome indicators, will be used in the management of activities in the Promise Zone Plan.

Suggested 2 page limit. Narrative should not repeat information provided in the Goals and Activities Template.

- 2) Complete the Goals and Activities Template within www.Max.gov for each proposed goal in the Promise Zone. The applicant must complete at least one template for each applicable Promise Zone goal and activity and may identify additional community goals if needed. The Max.gov survey will allow the applicant to identify up to six goals, each of which may include up to three subgoals. See Appendix for category descriptions and examples. *The Goals and Activities Template will not count toward the 25 page limit.*¹³

Section IV – Part C: Promise Zone Sustainability and Financial Feasibility (5 points)

Reviewers will assess the sustainability and financial feasibility of the Promise Zone Plan and coordinating structure.

Reviewers will rate all of the following factors:

- 1) Across all of the identified goals, the strength of the plan for obtaining funds for activities;

¹³ *Note:* As specified in the Application Overview, applicants who are unable to submit their applications via www.Max.gov may request alternative arrangements for submission, by emailing a request to PromiseZones@HUD.gov by October, 17, 2014.



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- 2) Soundness of the infrastructure for retaining commitment and coordination of implementation partner organizations that promotes sustainability of the Promise Zone Plan, including public and private partnerships and stakeholders, during the planned life of the Promise Zone.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) A narrative describing the plan for obtaining funds for each goal listed in the Section IV-Part B for which funds have not already been obtained. Include a budget projection for funding project coordination for the first 5 years of designation, and a description of how a Promise Zone designation would bolster efforts to secure additional funds for partnership structure and/or specific Promise Zone goals and activities. *Suggested 2-3 page limit.*



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Section V – Selection Criteria: Capacity and Local Commitment (50 points)

Section V – Part A: Partnership Structure (10 points)

Reviewers will assess the soundness of the partnership structure.

Reviewers will rate the following factors:

- 1) The clarity of roles and responsibilities, including factors such as:
 - Clarity of implementation partner responsibilities for executing components of the Promise Zone Plan;
 - Appropriateness of implementation partners based on their designated role in the Promise Zone Plan (Section IV- Part B);
 - The role of citizens in the governance structure; and
 - Clarity of partnership governance structure.
- 2) The strength of accountability mechanisms for ensuring effective partnerships, including oversight processes and contractual measures and remedies for non-performance

€ Submit:

- 1) A narrative detailing partnership structures, including the specific roles and responsibilities of each implementation partner organization, the role of citizens, and the accountability mechanisms. If different offices within a larger organization (for example, programs within a large nonprofit) are responsible for particular functions, please specify. For the first five Promise Zone designees, CNCS funded five AmeriCorps VISTA members to support Promise Zone goals and activities. Should AmeriCorps VISTA members be available to support second round Promise Zone designees, describe potential roles and responsibilities and potential organizational sponsors.¹⁴
- 2) A Promise Zone-specific diagram of the partnership structure that clearly shows the structure for implementing, coordinating, governing and reporting on the different goals and activities for the Promise Zone Plan. *Suggested 3-4 page limit for narrative and diagram of partnership structure.*
- 3) Optional additional documents: Letters of support are included in the Additional Documents section 35 page limit.

¹⁴ More information about AmeriCorps VISTA can be found at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-vista>



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Section V- Part B: Capacity of Lead Applicant (8 points)

Reviewers will assess the capacity of lead applicant organization to achieve outcomes through implementation of sophisticated, multi-layered community revitalization efforts. Degree to which prior experience of the lead organization is similar to, or has prepared the applicant for, the scale, scope, and complexity of the proposed Promise Zone effort.

As applicable to the Promise Zone Plan, reviewers will rate the following factors

- 1) Role of current organizational leadership within the community and this type of work at the local level;
- 2) Previous success achieving intended outcomes through identifying and implementing evidence-based strategies appropriate to goals;
- 3) Previous success leveraging and managing public, private, or tribal capital investments; this can include loan and grant programs offered by various federal, state, and tribal entities, tribal equity programs for business development, and/or tribal investments in the local economy;
- 4) Previous success identifying and managing multiple non-profit, for-profit, tribal, public sector and philanthropic partners towards successful project completion and positive outcomes. For tribal applicants, this may include private success managing healthcare and/or first responder collaborations and partnerships; this may also include success with industries related to development of natural resources, (e.g., oil, gas, coal, forestry, mining, fishing, or agriculture); and
- 5) For tribal applicants, evidence of advancing tribal self-determination.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) Narrative describing the lead organization's capacity to achieve Promise Zone outcomes through implementation of sophisticated, multi-layered community revitalization efforts. Provide examples of past relevant experience and results achieved. Also include evidence of the financial stability of the lead organization and any information related to past performance issues under federal grants.¹⁵ *Suggested 2 page limit.*

¹⁵ *Note:* Lead applicants should note past performance issues under federal grants and bankruptcies within in the past 5 years. To the extent that the lead applicant or any of the implementation partner organizations listed in the application has experienced a recapture of funds, disallowance of costs, monitoring finding, Inspector General finding, or failure to expend funds within the performance period under a federal grant, the applicant must disclose the incident(s), and in its narrative discuss the issues raised, and how, if funded, its current proposal will not experience similar problems. Failure to disclose past performance issues could result in disqualification of the application.



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Note: The lead organizations should include IRS Form 990, *Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax* or the most recent OMB Circular A-133 audit. These materials will not count toward the page limits.

Section V – Part C: Capacity of Implementation Partner Organizations (8 points)

Reviewers will assess the capacity of implementation partner organizations to implement Promise Zone Plan.

Reviewers will consider the capacity of implementation partner organizations most relevant to its roles and responsibilities within the plan. Points will be based on the degree to which prior experience of each implementation partner is similar to, or has prepared the applicant to successfully fulfill their roles and responsibilities in the context of a situation with the scale, scope, and complexity of the proposed Promise Zone effort.

€ Submit:

- 1) A narrative describing implementation partner organizations' capacity to implement their roles and responsibilities under the proposed Promise Zone Plan. A definition of implementation partners is included in the Appendix. Also include any information related to past performance issues under federal grants. *Suggested 3-4 page limit.*

Section V- Part D: Data and Evaluation Capacity (3 points)

Reviewers will assess the extent of prior experience that the organization responsible for data has to collect, manage, share, and use data for evaluation and continuous improvement.

Identify the organization (lead organization or implementing partner organization) that will manage data collection and evaluation for the Promise Zone goals and activities. Reviewers will also evaluate how organizations relevant to the Promise Zone Plan, such as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) or economic development agencies, have been and/or will be engaged in providing and analyzing data.

€ Submit:

- 1) A narrative explaining the prior experiences of the organization to manage, share, and use data. *Suggested 1-2 page limit.*

Section V- Part E: Resident Engagement Capacity (3 points)



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Reviewers will assess the extent of past experience in resident engagement by the organization responsible for coordinating resident engagement.

Reviewers will rate the applications based on:

- 1) Similarity between proposed Promise Zone activities and the previous efforts of the organization responsible for such engagement and
- 2) Extent of citizen input on project design and execution for those previous efforts

The organization responsible for leading resident engagement should be clearly identified in the diagram of partnership structure required in Section V- Part A.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) A narrative with detailed information on the organization's past experience with citizen engagement. Describe the proposed strategy for citizen engagement in the Promise Zone Plan, including engagement with current residents and newly arrived residents that may include immigrants and refugees. *Suggested 1-2 page limit.*

Section V- Part F: Strength and Extent of Local Government Commitment (10 points)

Reviewers will assess the strength and extent of commitment from relevant local government entities to target local funds and locally-controlled state and federal funds (not contingent upon receipt of Promise Zone designation) to achieve proposed Promise Zone outcomes.

€ **Submit:**

- 1) Letter(s) from local or tribal government executive for all UGLG or tribal areas involved that describes the commitment of local or tribal government to coordinate work and investments, including targeting of local and locally-controlled state and federal funds toward Promise Zone activities. This letter must list specific programs, amounts of commitment, distinguish between existing and new commitments, and note how funds are being realigned to support the Promise Zone Plan. It can be the same letter as required for the Section II – Eligibility Criteria and must be included with the Additional Documentation 35 page limit attachment. *Suggested 2 page limit.*
- 2) *If applicable, for UGLG or tribal area in which a Promise Zone has already been designated:* An explanation of how, if a second Promise Zone designation is awarded, the UGLG or tribal area plans to work with all of the designated communities at the same time and sustain the level of effort, resources and support committed to each Promise Zone under its respective Promise Zone Plan for the full term of each Promise Zone designation. This explanation should be included in the UGLG or tribal area letter of commitments.



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Section I – Lead Applicant Eligibility

Note: See Footnote 10 for approval delay. Each UGLG or tribal area can only support one Promise Zone application per application cycle.

Section V- Part G: Strength and Extent of Partnership Commitment (8 points)

Reviewers will assess the strength/extent of partnership commitment to coordinate work and investments to achieve outcomes within the Promise Zone (not contingent upon receipt of a Promise Zone designation).

Examples of such partnership commitment may include:

- 1) Local anchor institution commitment (e.g., hospitals, colleges/universities, major employers and business leaders, national and community foundations);
- 2) City, county, or other local governmental entities, regional planning authorities, tribal government(s), and state officials, as appropriate;
- 3) Commitment of local educational officials, criminal justice officials, economic development entities, workforce investment board, and community development advocates;
- 4) Involvement by citizen and community organizations in development of overall strategy and commitment to continued involvement;
- 5) Involvement of community-serving businesses and /or business associations; and

☞ **Submit:**

- 1) A narrative that describes existing and new in-kind and financial partnership commitments, including implementation partner organizations as well as the extent of supporting partner organizations. *Suggested 2 page limit.*
- 2) A preliminary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be finalized upon designation. The lead organization and all implementation partners should sign the MOU. The MOU should clearly state the role and responsibilities of partners, and note the commitment to data tracking and sharing. *The preliminary MOU is part of the 35 page Additional Documents limit.*

Note: See “Definitions and Clarifying Information” Section for a definition of Supporting Partner Organizations.



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DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFYING INFORMATION

Lead applicant/lead organization: The lead applicant is the organization that will, if selected, act as lead organization for a designated Promise Zone. Due to the nature of the initiative, Promise Zone activities are likely to be carried out by a variety of organizations and organization types. Eligible Lead Applicants for Promise Zone designation are: (1) Local governments (which includes county, city, town, township, parish, village, governmental authority or other general-purpose political subdivision of a state or any combination thereof) and Federally-recognized tribes¹⁶; (2) Non-profit organizations applying in partnership with local government or tribal government; (3) Public housing agencies applying in partnership with local government, or Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) applying in partnership with tribal government; (4) Local Education Agencies (LEAs) applying in partnership with local government or tribal government; (5) Community colleges applying in partnership with local or tribal government. The lead organization will execute a Promise Zone designation agreement and be responsible to USDA for fulfilling the responsibilities of the Promise Zone designation. These responsibilities will include organizing and/or coordinating activities pursuant to the plan proposed in the designated community's application, and administering any funding or other benefits that designation may confer in the future to designated Promise Zones. The lead organization will also be responsible for tracking outcomes, periodically reporting to the participating federal agencies, and participating in evaluation activities as requested by federal agencies. The lead organization will provide certification to other organizations applying for grants and other benefits that, if received, would help to advance the Promise Zone Plan. Organizations receiving such certifications will provide them in federal funding competitions and the conferring of benefits to designated Promise Zones.

To the extent that the lead organization is unable to directly perform any of these duties, it will delegate them specifically to an implementation partner organization, and continue to oversee the fulfillment of all of the responsibilities under the Promise Zone designation agreement. The lead organization will be responsible for replacing the roles that implementation partner

¹⁶ "Tribal applicants" are: Federally-recognized tribes as well as duly established political subdivisions of a Federally-recognized tribe. A "Federally-recognized tribe" is any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community of Indians, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act [43 USCS §§ 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 pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.) A Non-profit organization applying in partnership with a Federally-recognized tribal government may apply as a tribal applicant.



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organizations and other partners may play in the Promise Zone Plan in the event that one or more such partners are unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Transfer of the lead organization to another organization than the lead applicant will require approval by participating federal agencies, pursuant to the terms of the Promise Zone designation agreement.

Implementation partner organization: An implementation partner organization is an organization that agrees to fulfill specific responsibilities to carry out the day-to-day work and operations of the Promise Zone Plan, as detailed in the community’s Promise Zone application and any amendments, documents referenced in the Promise Zone designation agreement, and other documents that may exist among the partner organizations in the Promise Zone Plan.

Supporting partner organization: A supporting partner organization is an organization that will not carry out day-to-day work of the initiative, but will contribute resources or advise on the direction of the Promise Zone strategy.

Local Education Agency: As defined by the Department of Education Race to the Top Notice, a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

Nonprofit: Nonprofits eligible to be an applicant under this notice are entities that are classified as such in accordance with section 501(c) of the Federal Tax Code or have been designated as such by their state government. A nonprofit organization can be organized for the following purposes: charitable, religious, educational, scientific, or other similar purposes in the public interest. To obtain tax-exempt status, qualified organizations must file an application with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and receive designation as such by the IRS. For more information, go to www.irs.gov. Entities that are in the process of applying for tax-exempt status, but have not yet received nonprofit designation from the IRS by the application deadline date, will not be considered an eligible applicant. All nonprofit applicants must submit either their IRS determination letter to prove their 501(c) status or the letter from the state government to prove their nonprofit status.

Public Housing Agency: The term “public housing agency” has the meaning provided in section 3(b)(6) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a).

Examples of local government and other partner commitment: Commitments may be made to the Promise Zone Plan by many organizations acting in the community in ways that support



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Promise Zone goals and activities. The level of intensity and duration of such commitments may range from occasional assistance and expressions of general support, to the ongoing roles and day-to-day responsibilities taken on by implementation partners, to the lead organization's responsibility for overall coordination, reporting and delivery of results. Examples of commitments that would be less intensive and consistent than those of an implementation partner might include in-kind donations of the use of meeting space, equipment, telecommunications services, or staffing for particular functions; letters or other expressions of support for Promise Zone activities and applications for resources at the local, state and federal level; participation in steering committees or other advisory bodies with respect to the overall Promise Zone Plan or particular elements of it; permanent donations of funding, land, equipment, facilities or other resources; or the provision of other types of support without taking on a formal role in the day-to-day operations and advancement of the Promise Zone Plan as described in the definitions of implementation partner or lead organization.

Tiers of evidence:

Pre-Preliminary evidence:¹⁷ Quantitative or qualitative data has been collected from program staff, program participants, or beneficiaries, and this data has been used for program improvement, performance measurement reporting, and/or tracking.

Preliminary evidence:¹⁸ Based on a reasonable hypothesis and supported by credible research findings. Research has yielded promising results for this program model or a similar program model. Examples: 1) outcome studies that track participants through a program and measure participants' responses at the end of the program or 2) third-party before and after data that determines whether participants have improved on an intended outcome.

Moderate evidence:¹⁹ From previous studies on the program or intervention and supports causal conclusions about the intervention but has limited generalizability, because of limited information on implementation. The reverse can also be true – studies that only support moderate causal conclusions but have broad general applicability. Examples: (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 implementation or analysis that limit generalizability or (2) correlational research with strong statistical controls for selection bias and for discerning the influence of internal factors.

¹⁷ Corporation for National and Community Service, Americorps Grants 2014 NOFA

¹⁸ Corporation for National and Community Service, Social Innovation Fund
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund/evidence-evaluation>

¹⁹ Corporation for National and Community Service, Social Innovation Fund
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund/evidence-evaluation>



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Strong evidence:²⁰ From previous studies on the program, the design of which can support causal conclusions, and, that in total, include enough of the range of participants and settings to support scaling up to the tribal, state, regional, or national level.

Examples: (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 randomized controlled, multisite trial that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program.

Mapping Tool Overview

The Promise Zone mapping tool overlays the locally defined neighborhood/community boundaries with data associated with that area and estimates the rates of certain indicators in that area using a proportional allocation methodology. For metropolitan areas, the tool uses Census block group (as defined for Census 2010) as the smallest statistical boundary for the available data. For non-metropolitan areas, the tool uses census tract data to account for less precision in low-population areas. If the locally defined neighborhood/community is partially within two different Census areas, the data for each factor or threshold criteria are calculated based on the portion of the 2010 housing units located in each Census area for the vacancy variables and 2010 population for the population, poverty, and employment variables. The 2010 housing unit and population count data are available to HUD at the block level and thus can be used as the underlying data to apportion each block group and tract's appropriate share of importance.

For example, based on a user defined geography, 80 percent of the housing units in the locally defined neighborhood/community are in a block group with a poverty rate of 40 percent and 20 percent of the units are in a block group with a poverty rate of 10 percent. The "community poverty rate" would be calculated as: $(80\% \times 40\%) + (20\% \times 10\%) = 34\%$.

Mapping Tool Data Sources:

The data are from a variety of sources:

- 1) **ACS 2011** refers to the US Census American Community Survey 2007-2011 five-year estimates. These are the most recent nationally available data for small geographies at the same Census 2010 boundaries as the other data provided, using a statistical technique that combines five years of data to create reliable estimates for small areas.

²⁰ Corporation for National and Community Service, Social Innovation Fund
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund/evidence-evaluation>



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- 2) **CHAS 2010** refers to the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) special tabulations HUD receives of Census ACS data. The CHAS data used for this tool are based on ACS 2006-2010 five-year estimates see <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/cp.html> for more information.
- 3) **Census 2010** refers to block-level 2010 decennial counts of housing and population.
- 4) **USPS 2013** refers to the United States Postal Service long-term vacancy data as of June 30, 2013.

Additional Notes on Specific Variables:

Concentration of People in Poverty is calculated with data at the block group level from ACS 2011 for metropolitan areas and the tract level for non-metropolitan areas. This indicator represents the percent of people within the target geography who are below the poverty line. The estimated concentration of Extremely Low Income (ELI) households represents an approximation of the percent of households within the specified area whose household combined income is below 30% of the HUD defined Area Median Income (AMI). This ELI indicator is calculated with data from the block group level from Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2010. The final number included in this report for "poverty rate" is the greater of these two indicators.

Employment Rate is calculated with data at the block group level from ACS 2011 for metropolitan areas and the tract level for non-metropolitan areas. This indicator represents the percent of the labor force (age 16 and above) that is employed or in the labor force. Neither the numerator nor the denominator includes people in the armed forces or those outside of the labor force.

Long-term vacancy rates are calculated with data at the block group level with ACS 2011 and the USPS 2013, whichever source produces the greatest percentage.

For the USPS data, HUD calculates the percent of residential addresses (excluding "no-stat" addresses) that are vacant. In the USPS data, a "vacant" address is one that has not had mail picked up for 90 days or longer. The USPS Vacant addresses can also include vacation or migrant labor addresses so HUD uses ACS data to reduce vacancy counts in these cases.

Using the ACS data, HUD calculates the vacancy rate as the percent of housing units that are "other" vacant. These are units not for sale, for rent or vacant for seasonal or migrant housing. This is considered another proxy for long-term vacant housing.

In theory the USPS data should be a stronger measure of distress than the ACS data because they are for 100 percent of the units (ACS is a sample), are more current (ACS aggregates data



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over a 5 year period), and are intended specifically to capture addresses 90 or more days vacant. However, USPS data are particularly poor at capturing vacancy in rural areas. As such, HUD uses the ACS as a check on the USPS data so that every location gets a vacancy rate based on the greater of their USPS vacancy rate or their ACS 2007-2011 rate. For more information on HUD's USPS dataset, see: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/usps.html>.



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Appendix: Goals and Activities Template

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES TEMPLATE

Use the template below to lay out the goals and activities of the proposed Promise Zone Plan. Complete the template in www.Max.gov for each relevant goal in the Promise Zone application. The Max.gov survey will allow the applicant to identify up to six goals each of which include up to three subgoals per applicable goal area.

Check the box to acknowledge the following statement:

I give HUD and USDA permission to share information included in the Goals and Activities Template.²¹

Promise Zone Goal
<p>Select Promise Zone Goal from options listed below:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Create jobs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase economic activity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improve educational opportunities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce serious or violent crime</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other community goal (i.e. Health and wellness, affordable housing, etc.): [space for goal name]</p>
Description of Promise Zone Goal- 250 character limit
<p>[Description of the Promise Zone goal.]</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Increase educational opportunities and college and career readiness for all children living and attending school in the proposed Promise Zone.</p>
Community Subgoal- 250 character limit

²¹ Non-federal organizations including foundations, social investors, researchers, consultants, and networks of professionals and organizations have expressed interest in the work underway in communities applying for Promise Zone designations. Community stakeholders and other members of the public also request information from time to time. If you are willing to have HUD and USDA share the information you submit with the public for a particular activity, check the box indicating that the information can be shared for each activity.



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Appendix: Goals and Activities Template

<p>[Description of the subgoal and how it connects to the needs identified in Section IV Part A]</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Increase graduation rate for all students. In the proposed Promise Zone, there is a 43% high school graduation rate.</p>
<p>Activities and Interventions- 1,000 character limit</p> <p>[List any activities and interventions for implementing this subgoal. Distinguish between new and ongoing activities.]</p> <p><u>Example:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand college preparatory program for high school students to help with financial aid, testing, and college applications [Ongoing] • Closely monitor all students' academic progress throughout high school and intervene when it appears that academic performance is dropping [New] • Secure a Promise Neighborhood grant as funding is available [New]
<p>Rationale/Evidence²²- 1,000 character limit</p> <p>[Discuss how or why you believe the proposed activities will lead to the achievement of the subgoal in this specific context. How were they selected? Are they supported by evidence, promising practices, or is there other information that supports the selection or use of proposed activities to achieve the goal? Summarize the evidence and include citations.]</p>
<p>Implementing Partners- 1,000 character limit</p> <p>[List implementing organizations, including roles and responsibilities for each.]</p> <p><u>Example:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District 123 and Principal of the neighborhood high school located in the Promise Zone. The School District will provide additional resources to school counselors and provided targeted interventions to students at-risk of dropping out. • Nonprofit Organization X will provide college awareness seminars for parents and students to help increase awareness.
<p>Committed Financial Support</p> <p>[List any firm financial commitments for implementing this subgoal. Indicate the source of funds, activity, amount, start and end date for each source and identify the organization receiving the funds. Type N/A if not applicable]</p> <p><u>Example:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of Funds: College Awareness Outreach Grant for grades 9-12, Community

²² See definition of Evidence on page 22.



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Appendix: Goals and Activities Template

Foundation Y

Activity: Hold seminars and college awareness activities for parents

Amount: \$10,000

Start and end date: August 2014-July 2015.

Recipient: Nonprofit Organization X

- *Source of Funds: General Fund, School District 123*

Activity: Salary for additional school counselor

Amount: \$75,000

Start and end date: August 2014-July 2019

Recipient: Neighborhood High School

Financial Support Needed

[List the types of financial support needed for implementing this subgoal. Examples include: grant, loan, etc. Include activity, estimated amount, date of needed funds and intended organization receiving the funds. Type N/A if not applicable]

Example:

- *Type: Grant*
Activity: Funds to purchase test preparation materials for students
Estimated amount: \$25,000
Date: Beginning September 2015
Recipient: School District 123

Committed Non-Financial Support

[List any committed non-financial support for this subgoal. List the source and type of support, activity, start and end date for each resource and identify the organization receiving each resource. Type N/A if not applicable.]

Example:

- *Source and type: AmeriCorps Grant, Corporation for National and Community Service*
- *Activity: AmeriCorps member currently helps a small number of students after school*
- *Start and end date: August 2014-July 2015*
- *Recipient: Neighborhood High School*

Non-Financial Support Needed



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Appendix: Goals and Activities Template

[List the types of non-financial support needed for implementing this subgoal. List the type of support, activity, start and end date for each resource and identify the intended organization receiving each resource. Type N/A if not applicable.]

Example:

- *Type: Volunteers*
- *Activity: Need 10-15 total, part- and full-time staff and volunteers to expand the afterschool program beyond a small group of students*
- *Start and end date: September 2015-2018*
- *Recipient: Neighborhood High School*

Expected Outcomes and Measurement- 1,000 character limit

[List measures or metrics that will be used to determine whether activities are leading to the achievement of the subgoal or any interim outcomes.]

Example:

- *Increase graduation rate 10 percentage points by 2018*
- *Increase in student and parent satisfaction on school district survey*
- *Increase in college acceptance rate*

Data Collection, Tracking and Sharing - 1,000 character limit

[For top-level tracking of progress of subgoals, describe how data will be collected, tracked and shared.]

Example:

- *Track graduation, college acceptance, and student and parent satisfaction rates*
- *Share information annually with Promise Zone partners and community*

Timeline/Milestones for Implementation - 1,000 character limit

[Briefly describe anticipated timeline and milestones for implementation of this subgoal and associated activities. Omit information on needed financial or non-financial support that would be redundant with information provided above.]

Example:

- *Hire extra afterschool staff by the beginning of 2015-16 school year*
- *Have a completed and staffed tracking system by 2016-17 school year*
- *Secure federal grant funding by 2017*

Any federal regulatory and/or statutory barriers

[Describe any federal regulations and/or authorizing statutes that create barriers to the implementation of the activity, with citations, or type N/A if not applicable.]

Example:

- *N/A*



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Appendix: Goals and Activities Template