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Executive Summary

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Existing Grantmaking Institution Statement - Established in 1997, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NC) has been a grantmaking institution since inception. The 501(c)3 nonprofit was created as a result of a Family Preservation and Support Act statewide planning commission and charged with being a strategy and funding vehicle capable of combining public and private interests and resources to strengthen systems and services responsible for keeping children safe and increasing protective factors to improve child and youth outcomes.

NC has generated and disbursed through competitive and strategic grantmaking nearly \$30 million since 1997. Grantee organizations have ranged from service providers working directly with children, youth and families to community, regional and statewide backbone infrastructures / collaboratives supporting broad scope systems of care responsible for their care.

2. Geographically-Based Proposal Scaling a Youth Development Model

This is a Geographically-Based proposal. Nebraska Children will take our Project Everlast youth development model to scale in rural areas across the state, utilizing an open competition to select high-performing nonprofit organizations and allowing us to establish statewide coverage of the Project Everlast model within existing systems already showing their own preliminary evidence of success in serving youth ages 14-24 who have experienced foster care, juvenile justice involvement or homelessness.

3. Budget and Project Period

An annual request of one million dollars in SIF funding is matched with one million dollars of cash already secured for year one and pledged to be available for years two through five from two private partners for this specific purpose.

4. Project Summary

The mission of our Project Everlast (PE) youth development model is to bring young people together with service providers, funders and decision-makers to create supportive communities committed to improving outcomes for youth ages 14-24 with foster care, juvenile justice or homelessness experiences. It is designed to build strong collaborations and infrastructure necessary for community ownership of youth well-being and the realization of improved youth outcomes. This model requires firm cross-sector commitments and requires collective impact, prevention, protective and promotive factors and youth engagement.

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PE is fully operational in two urban areas of Omaha and Lincoln and has demonstrated positive outcomes for participating youth in domains of education, employment, permanence, housing, health, transportation and economic stability. The model is at a Preliminary Evidence level with improved youth outcomes demonstrated by pre-then-post testing of 1,217 PE youth ages 16-24 at twice-annual intervals since 2010. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Opportunity Passport; Participant Survey is used for PE youth engaged in that program.

Specific outcome areas for model implementation through high-performing subrecipients include: 1) Improved outcomes for youth in seven life domains, 2) Sustainable rural community collaboratives with an identified lead backbone organization capable of taking the PE model to scale in their geographic areas, 2) Use of high quality data to ensure focus on priority needs, 3) Adoption of evidence-based practices and policies, 4) Provision of capacity building assistance to support effective and efficient local scaling, 5) rigorous evaluation of the process and impact areas relevant to both the collaborative system of supports and youth outcomes and 6) Braiding existing and securing new financing mechanisms to a) meet the SIF local match requirements and b) grow and sustain a full array of services available locally for target youth.

Program Design

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NC)

B. PROGRAM DESIGN - Strategy B: NC will competitively select 7-10 subrecipient organizations in rural Nebraska within six months of SIF award who are qualified and ready to implement the Project Everlast (PE) model to improve life outcomes for youth ages 14-24 who have experienced foster care, juvenile justice involvement or homelessness.

1. RATIONALE AND APPROACH

a. Geographically-based Proposal -- Youth Development Issue Area. Nebraska Children will partner with high-performing subrecipients to take the Project Everlast (PE) youth development model to scale in rural Nebraska. Communities may consist of cities, entire counties, or regions comprised of multiple cities and counties. Proposals to serve low income, philanthropically underserved areas will be prioritized in the subrecipient selection process. NC and competitively selected subrecipients in rural areas of Nebraska will further develop and refine Project Everlast's intervention theory of change in order to improve the well-being of targeted youth within a community infrastructure built on collective impact strategies and a prevention-focused system of care. Expected results will address SIFs Youth Development Issue Area and will improve outcomes in seven well-being domains for young people ages 14-24 who've experienced child welfare, juvenile justice involvement or homelessness.

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b. Critical Social Problem and Deficiencies in the Current Response.

The critical social problem is the unfortunate reality that thousands of young people ages 14-24 in rural Nebraska who find themselves disconnected from a positive life course due to child welfare or juvenile justice system involvement or who have experienced homelessness, are lacking the services and supports they need to make successful transitions to adulthood. This fact is evident in both statistics and qualitative data gathered from affected youth and youth-serving organizations.

i. Geographic and Demographic Overview. Nebraska is a geographically large and diverse state spanning 76,872 square miles with a 2013 estimated population of 1,868,516 people and 43 percent of these living in rural Nebraska (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture-Economic Research Service. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 89.7% of the state's population is White, 4.8% Black/African-American, 1.3% American Indian & Alaska Native, 2.1% Asian, and 9.9% is of Hispanic/Latino origin (2013). This geography and population distribution creates statewide infrastructure development and program sustainability challenges, considering that some youth live in the rural frontier with sparse population bases and few services available or within a reasonable distance (55% of children and youth), while other youth (45%) live in densely populated inner city neighborhoods where there are more services and where service coordination and avoidance of duplication is a challenge. The Project Everlast model is an established presence in our three urban counties, fully operational in Omaha (Douglas and Sarpy Counties) since 2010 and in Lincoln (Lancaster County) since 2014. The remaining 90 counties of Nebraska are presently lacking the formal structure and service array PE can offer. Despite Nebraska's low unemployment rate (3.6%) large middle class (56.6%) and high proportion of working parents with children between the ages of 6 to 17 (77.3%), 40.9% of Nebraska's children were living in families making under 200% of the federal poverty line and 14.6% of families with children lived at or below 100% of the federal poverty line in 2013. Involvement in child welfare, juvenile justice and homelessness systems is highly correlated to poverty status in families.

In Nebraska, an average of 300 youth age out of the foster care system annually. (NDHHS 2007-2011) Life and well-being outcomes for youth involved in the child welfare system are statistically, personally and socially dire. Data analysis by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center for Children, Families, and the Law showed: by age 23, 75.7% of NE youth formerly in care received a high school diploma or GED compared to 92.7% of same-age youth nationwide, 81.2% of Nebraska youth formerly in care did not have health insurance, 50.3% have a mental health diagnosis, youth formerly in care are only half as likely (37.6%) as their same-age counterparts (75.5%) to have paid full- or part-time employment, and more than 1,500 youth received one or more transition service between

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July 2012 and July 2013.

Project Everlast youth in Omaha and Lincoln enrolled in the Opportunity Passport (OP) asset building program complete twice-annual surveys. Since 2010 when the survey was first administered, 1,217 young people ages 16-24 have completed one or more surveys. This surveyed group show the following characteristics: 1. Participant age has increased over time from 18.75 yrs to 20.28 yrs of age, 2. The majority of young people identify as Black/African American (40%) and White (35%), 3. Most participants were women (65%) versus 35% men, 4. The percentage with one or more children has been growing since 2011 from 17% to 30% in 2014, 5. The percentage of PE parents whose children live with them has increased since 2011 from 62% to 82% in 2014. The majority of parenting youth (69%) have one child, 25% have two and 6% have three or more.

ii. Effectiveness of Current Solutions to Target Youth Challenges in Rural Nebraska

In August 2012, data provided by NDHHS to identify gaps in Nebraska's system for youth who age out of foster care showed that among that since 2007, 57% of them immediately lost Medicaid coverage upon exiting care, and only 35% received services from the Former Ward program. A 2012 survey of youth eligible for Former Ward services and service providers revealed 73% of younger youth had not heard of the program and 63% of those 18 and older were not receiving services. Among stakeholders, 46% did not feel the Former Ward program was meeting the needs of older youth in foster care and 70% indicated they would support changes to improve inclusiveness, flexibility, case management, and awareness of services.

In 2012, NC conducted statewide focus groups of youth ages 14 to 21 with current or former foster care experience. A total of 108 youth participated in eight cities (six rural and two urban) with active Project Everlast Youth Councils. Youth suggestions included making supports more inclusive of non-college bound youth and older youth who do achieve permanency, being more flexible in initial and ongoing eligibility requirements - including an open door policy for youth who may walk away from available supports but decide at a later time to re-engage with services, offering more consistent and longer-term support and guidance, ensuring caseworkers and other service providers are knowledgeable about specific elements of services available, and raising awareness about services in general -- both among service providers and youth.

The above-described input from youth and providers and statistics showing low use of the Former Ward program resulted in its discontinuation and replacement with more useful supports through legislation authorizing the extension of foster care services to age 21 (Bridges to Independence program).

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c. The Project Everlast Theory of Change

Our PE model theory of change is supported by a study of effectiveness at promoting evidence-based programming, multi-level systemic change and the collaborations to develop strategic partnerships. NC was a statewide early adopter of the general capacity-building technical assistance activities needed to build a multi-level Prevention Support System in communities and states. (Translating Evidence-Based Policy to Practice: A Multi-Level Partnership Using the Interactive Systems Framework, Melissa Lim Brodowski, PhD, MSW, MPH, Jacqueline Counts, PhD, MSW, et al, 2013)

As the implementation of interventions is an iterative rather than a linear process, so too is the development and planning of intervention implementation, particularly those that include interventions involving multiple components, and across organizational systems and contexts (i.e. cultural, demographic, and geographic). The first process in the iterative development of and planning for complex system interventions is the: 1) identification of evidence currently available through extant research and data; 2) development and refinement of intervention change theory; 3) initial modeling of the intervention processes and outcomes, and 4) broad-based, encompassing stakeholder engagement, input, and modification or adaptation during each of these steps. By utilizing these primary implementation components, NC and competitively selected subrecipients will further develop and refine Project Everlast's intervention theory of change in order to improve the well-being of targeted young people as well as the community infrastructure supporting their successful transition to adulthood. This will also effectively engage stakeholders across systems to better identify and more appropriately address youth needs and positively impact the life trajectory of the target population.

As a result of scaling the model statewide, we will facilitate broad-based, multi-sector transformation of Nebraska's ability to mitigate negative life outcomes for one of the most vulnerable population groups in our state. Communities and the state will realize long-term outcomes by investing earlier in the life trajectory of the target population, avoiding higher-end costs of chronic unemployment, homelessness, welfare system involvement, poor health, and justice system involvement. Project Everlast has proven its ability in Nebraska's urban areas to improve PE youth outcomes in areas of educational attainment including post-secondary education, employment, health care access and utilization -- physical, dental and mental, establishing permanent connections to lifelong supportive relationships for general well-being and support in times of crisis, eliminating homelessness upon exiting the foster care system and beyond, accumulating savings and assets, and having access to transportation to attend to demands of school, work, and daily life. Project Everlast has achieved

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these positive outcomes by engaging multiple stakeholders involved with youth currently in and exiting the child welfare system in a systematic planning process to develop cross-cutting model interventions that: 1) increases the understanding of the risk and protective factors of youth in the foster care system and the relationship between those factors and outcomes; 2) is grounded in Nebraska specific data and the experiences of youth and service providers; and 3) that builds a Nebraska specific practice model from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Practice Pathways Tool, the USHHS Service Array community assessment and planning model, and the President's Office of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART).

Nebraska is a state with a diverse range of geographic and cultural contexts that can differently impact all youth and young adults. The diversity within our state also differentially impacts the structure and practice of support systems and the infrastructure capacity and practices in place across the state. One of the major geographic and cultural contrasts in Nebraska is along the rural -- urban continuum. Of Nebraska's 93 counties, 32 have fewer than 5 persons per square mile and Nebraska's largest metropolitan area has over 1,500 persons per square mile. From this basis, our theory of change builds from the premise that a single intervention model may not be universally appropriate across the state. PE requires more rigorous evaluation in a statewide context to determine differences in urban and rural implementation of the practice model that has proven successful in our urban communities; we propose to better understand this possible dynamic with the help of a third-party evaluator during the SIF project period.

Community-based regional planning efforts focused on improving outcomes for youth exiting the foster care system have been ongoing in Nebraska through NC's Child and Youth Well-Being Initiative (CYWB). These efforts have identified, reviewed, and adapted various intervention models over time and in different community context with significant community input and support. Therefore, the second premise of our theory of change is that a base of regionally identified solutions to address improved outcomes for target youth is in place and ready to be built upon in a systematic way.

Engaging stakeholders across political and geographic levels in a thoughtfully structured cross-sector implementation process, guided by an encompassing initial framework (JCYOI Practice Pathways Tool), with a data driven and guided focus, will produce a validated PE intervention practice model that can positively improve the lives of target youth for generations to come in Nebraska, with replicability potential in other areas of the United States.

Project Everlast's short-term outcome from the implementation process with subrecipients in rural

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areas is to have developed a validated intervention practice model based upon the best available evidence and input from stakeholders that includes rigorous evaluation and implementation plans to positively impact and improve outcomes for 14-21 year old youth exiting from the child welfare or juvenile justice system and young adults up to age 24 that have exited from those systems. The specific outcome areas for implementation of the PE model through selected high-performing subrecipients include: 1) Establish or enhance sustainable rural NE culturally competent, cross-sector, community collaboratives with an identified lead backbone organization capable of taking the PE model to scale in their geographic areas, 2) Use of high quality data to ensure community collaboratives focus on priority needs of the target population, 3) Application of evidence-based practices and policies in the local implementation of the PE model specific to priority youth needs, 4) Provision of capacity building supports to community collaboratives to support effective and efficient scaling of the PE model, 4) rigorous evaluation of the process and impact areas relevant to both the collaborative system of supports and the desired outcomes for target youth, and 5) Braiding existing and securing new financing mechanisms to a) meet the SIF local match requirements and b) grow and sustain a full array of services available locally for the target youth population.

The long-term outcome of scaling PE to serve all target youth in Nebraska is to ultimately improve the quality and quantity of life among Nebraskans whose lives have intersected with child welfare or juvenile justice systems or who have experienced homelessness. Specific measures of impact within the PE model assess youth progress in areas of Permanence, Education, Employment, Housing, Physical and Mental Health, Personal and Community Engagement, and Economic Success. PE model strategies to help youth achieve measurable gains in these life areas are modeled after the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Theory of Change: Youth Engagement, Partnerships and Resources, Research, Evaluation and Communications, Public Will and Policy, and Increased Youth Opportunities.

The PE intervention model proceeds from the two base assumptions 1) Nebraska's geographic and population diversity necessitates a practice model that is adaptive to those diverse issues and the model must account for that diversity and 2) the JCYOI Practice Pathways Tools and the community organization and assessment tools used by NC's CYWB initiative provide an effective framework base on which to take the model to scale in rural areas of Nebraska for youth exiting and young adults that have exited child welfare and the juvenile justice system to improve participant outcomes.

Each subrecipient collaborative will be responsible for working through the Practice Pathways Tool with support from the community-based evaluator and will be charged with developing practices at

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critical intervention points to maintain model integrity resulting in positive impact on core systemic and youth outcomes found to exist in the urban PE models. Facilitation of each collaborative's local process will be provided by assigned NC PE staff. Each collaborative subrecipient will submit final intervention plans to the PE Leadership Team for testing of adherence to PE model fidelity and approval to proceed.

The Leadership Team will review through an iterative process, findings uncovered during the implementation work, providing feedback and recommendations for revisions and adjustments throughout the course. The Leadership Team will be the final decision making body on all intervention practice model, evaluation, and statewide scaling efforts, seeking approval where needed from CNCS-SIF.

i. Investment Approach -- Project Everlast is a coordinated initiative exemplifying the success a collective impact approach can have when public and private interests work toward a common goal, share data, design evaluation and data collection systems in unison, and braid resources to assure cross-sector investment and long term sustainability able to endure the ebbs and flow of public and private sector resource fluctuations. We are committed to this approach because we believe that sustainable solutions to complex social problems can only be achieved when the community itself is wholly invested.

Project Everlast and its context of building community around the youth is all about helping marginalized, particularly vulnerable young people beat the statistical odds and reach their full potential with the supports that young people with intact and nurturing permanent families enjoy, which directly supports our organizational mission. By investing in infrastructures and evidence-based supports in rural areas, we will ultimately allow youth to have access to the resources they need regardless of their place of residence.

ii. Specific Measurable Outcomes -- The overarching goals and objectives crafted for the SIF supported PE scaling in rural Nebraska are: Goal 1: Further validate the PE model to prove effectiveness at improving life outcomes for at-risk youth transitioning to adulthood. Obj 1a: By September 30, 2020, achieve a moderate to strong evidence level, as defined by SIF, for the PE model. Baseline Measure: Preliminary level of evidence as of March 2015. Goal 2: Expand the PE model to serve additional youth populations demographically and geographically. Obj 2a: By October 1, 2018, increase from 1,000 to 2,500 minimum, the number of youth served by a fully functioning PE model. Baseline Measure: 1,000 youth with foster care experience ages 14-25 served in limited locations of Nebraska as of March 2015. Obj 2b: By October 1, 2018, increase the percentage of NE counties served by high

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functioning cross-sector backbone organizations capable of implementing the PE model with fidelity from 25% to 50%, and by October 1, 2020, increase the percentage to 85% of counties served at minimum. Goal 3: Diversify and increase financing strategies and options for PE infrastructure, service delivery to youth, and individual youth asset accumulation for their economic stability. Obj 3a: By October 1, 2017, increase from one to two, minimum, alternate financing schemes for the PE model with consideration for resource shortages in low income communities that are philanthropically underserved.

Project Everlast model outcomes for youth and community collaboratives using our Child and Youth Well-Being Initiative (CYWB) framework have yielded positive change in the way target youth are 1) understood by the public and private systems with responsibility to help them transition to adulthood, 2) engaged in the processes of policy and practice change at community and state levels, 3) materially, psychologically, and physiologically supported with specific resources youth identify as most beneficial to their well-being and progress, and 4) empowered to advocate within the systems of care intended to support them and their peers to follow.

Outcomes specific to PE youth in our two urban sites reflect changes in participant status in areas of employment, permanence/supportive relationships, health, education, housing, and transportation. Surveys are taken online twice annually. Youth take one of two surveys: those in the Opportunity Passport₂ program take the Opportunity Passport Participant Survey designed by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI), and those involved in other Project Everlast services take a nearly identical version on SurveyMonkey. Survey results indicate that the longer a young person has been involved in PE services, the better the outcomes in employment, education, housing, and transportation. Urban participant outcomes from 2009/2010 through the most recent survey administered in October 2014 showed these changes in youth well-being: Employment -- Age 16 and over with a job: at first survey completed (new to PE participation), only 37% of respondents were employed and by the 8th to 11th survey completed, 80% of respondents were employed - and among the employed youth, the percent working full-time for six or more months consecutively increased from 5% at first survey to 36% by their 8th -- 11th completed survey; Education -- PE youth age 18 and older who received their high school diploma or equivalency increased from 62% to 96% of participants and the percent increase for youth who received education beyond high school rose from 47% to 75% during their involvement with PE; Housing -- among out-of-care PE youth, the percent of those paying for their housing and reporting it to be safe, affordable, and stable increased from 61% at entry to 78% most recently; and also among out-of-care youth, they reported increased access to

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transportation, from 80% at entry to 91%. PE participants also revealed two areas where outcomes over time were less favorable: Permanence -- when first surveyed about having enough people in their lives to turn to for advice about a crisis or job and school questions, 64% of youth said they did have enough people to turn to for advice, but at the 8th-11th survey only 46% of youth believed they had enough people to ask for advice, which, hypothetically, may be due to their fuller realization about what it takes to live independently and to navigate complex systems of higher education, health care and insurance, and financial responsibility; Health Insurance -- the percentage of out-of-care youth who had health insurance coverage at the time of their 1st PE survey was 50% versus only 47% at the 8th-11th survey, which may be attributable to the fact that Medicaid coverage continues for a defined period after a young person ages out.

iii. Subrecipient Types Needed to Advance Project Everlast Goals- Subrecipient prospects must have these basic characteristics to be considered for a SIF subaward by the NC Selection Team: a Nebraska based 501(c)(3) IRS designated nonprofit, high-performing with respect to fiscal integrity, competent leadership, a current and aggressive strategic plan for their organization and services that aligns with the mission and purposes of NC, PE outcome areas, and evidence-based positive youth development strategies in general, experience and potential capacity to collect and use quality data from participants and systems they partner with, be a member of an existing cross-sector community collaborative with successful experience serving the target youth population, experienced with implementation of other evidence-based models and programs serving their community's children, youth and families, and a high probability of achieving the local match requirement to SIF funding based on their history of securing cash match from private sources.

iv. NC Value-Adds to Scaling Project Everlast with Selected Subrecipients -- Two primary value-adds NC offers are: 1) Institutionalization of a sustainable place-based Child and Youth Well-Being infrastructure through which communities can continuously assess and re-assess youth needs, coordinate and integrate resources, assure delivery of evidence-based services, inform and adopt best practice policy, and share in the responsibility and successes of meeting youth needs via common data collection, more rigorous evaluation across sectors, and shared learning from the results of that monitoring and evaluation; and 2) Changing community orientation from treatment and higher-end, more costly services to prevention of problems ever occurring or mitigating their effects before they become trans-generational, chronic, and embedded in entire family systems (breaking the cycle). Below is a discussion of the CYWB framework and the prevention context under which the PE model will function in subrecipient communities:

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Overview of the Value-Add CYWB framework: The goal of CYWB is a community based prevention system that promotes safe, healthy, nurturing and successful children and youth who are prepared for successful transitions to adulthood. It requires a community collaborative body with a capable lead backbone organization which builds capacity and strengthens individuals, organizations, coalitions, community and state systems to support safe, healthy and nurturing environments. It is based on research from the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall which shows that the field must alter the community context and environments in which programs can be strengthened and population outcomes can be achieved. It creates safe and nurturing environments for all children where communities have parents and other caretakers supported through both formal services and normative values. Nebraska Children will bring this dual approach to SIF subrecipient communities which achieves results for current and future young people with foster care, juvenile justice and homelessness experiences that are broad, reaching across all youth-serving sectors in the community, deep in the array of services and supports available in their communities (place-based), and self-sustaining in the identification and braiding of available resources and the securing of new, focused, resources that support evidence-based work to prevent future challenges to the target population. CYWB invests in communities willing to integrate the best practices of both program and community building and is ideally suited for best supporting at-risk youth in transition.

Prevention System Overview: A coordinated prevention system includes a life-span approach.

(Halfon, Neal, Addressing health inequalities in the US: a life course health development approach Social science & medicine (1982), 2012; 74(5): 671-3) (Racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes: a life-course perspective. Lu MC, Halfon N. Maternal Child Health J. 2003 Mar;7(1):13-30. Review.) While prevention efforts beginning as early in life as possible are the optimum, it is important to never stop the investments, integration and coordination, and partnerships needed for services and supports to enhance well-being into young adulthood.

Through the CYWB framework in subrecipient communities, NC will help collaboratives build prevention Protective Factors, which are conditions in children, youth, families and communities that, when present, increase health and well-being. Protective Factor attributes act as buffers and help parents and caregivers to parent more effectively, even under stress, and address: Nurturing and Attachment, Knowledge of parenting and child development, Youth and Parental resilience, Social connections, and Concrete supports in times of need.

A transition youth system within a prevention context is critical because it depends on the same organized community services and supports that all children, youth and families need regardless of

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age and risk level in order to achieve outcomes.

In 2012, NC partnered with 11 counties in the Panhandle to expand protective factors we engage in CYWB communities to include the Youthrive promotive and protective factors (Center for the Study of Social Policy) along with our seven PE Youth Well-Being Outcomes. The Protective Factors identified earlier align with the Project Everlast Well-Being Outcomes founded in the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Practice Pathways, and are further enhanced by Youthrive factors of physically emotionally healthy, hopeful, optimistic, curious and resilient, supportive family and social networks, service to community or society, ability to form and sustain caring committed relationships, and success in school and workplace, which are tangible measures of youth development progress within the PE model strategies.

In 2008, Nebraska Children partnered with five communities to launch the CYWB framework with a prevention system focus. In 2014, we replicated this initiative in five additional communities. Evaluation of the community framework has been conducted by the University of Nebraska-Omaha Munroe-Meyer Institute on an ongoing basis. The 2014 Annual Evaluation report shows favorable Child and Youth Well-Being Initiative outcomes and can be found in Part C. Organizational Capability discussion elsewhere in this proposal.

d. Other Federal Funding. Nebraska Children is not in receipt of, currently pursuing, or in pending status for any federal funding for purposes related to this SIF proposal.

2. PROPOSAL FOR SUBRECIPIENT SELECTION -- Nebraska Children intends to identify and select high-performing subrecipients in rural Nebraska who will all implement the same intervention (Project Everlast model) and participate in the same evaluation processes.

a. Identifying and Selecting High-Performing Subrecipients -- Investments in subrecipient organizations will include examination of these base determinants, with other criteria to be included per guidance from CNCS as part of the final Subrecipient Selection Plan post award:

Level of evidence the prospect has built in their own youth service programs, Level of capacity to implement the proposed SIF evaluation plan in full cooperation with NC and subrecipient peers, as well as in compliance with NC grantor and national SIF requirements, Degree of commitment and readiness to adopt the PE model with fidelity as evidenced by number and quality of community partners aligned with the subrecipient organization willing to invest time and resources in the process and desired outcomes, Geographic area to be served is high need based on statistics such as number of youth in public systems and child poverty rate and philanthropically underserved, Potential ability of the subrecipient to raise required 1:1 cash match based on prior fund development experiences, and

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Overall fiscal integrity of the applicant.

b. Implementing an Open, Competitive Selection Process -- NC will initiate an open and competitive Request for Qualifications or Proposals (RFQ or RFP) across rural Nebraska within three months of SIF grant award to NC (timeframe dependent on SIF award date, new SIF grantee orientation, and approval of our Selection Plan by CNCS). At minimum, we will ensure that the RFQ/P document and promotional distribution material clearly identifies the desired characteristics of potential applicants (such as those described in 2.a. above), whom to contact with questions, how the RFQ/P document and supporting materials can be accessed, approved selection criteria, date and time and method of submission, clear conveyance of the subrecipient requirements related to scaling Project Everlast in their proposed geographic area -- including the 1:1 cash match requirement, compliance with federal SIF guidelines, rules and regulations, and expectations of rapid growth and rigorous evaluation of the project if selected for funding.

i. Number and Range of Subrecipient Awards -- NC anticipates making 7 to 10 subrecipient awards over the course of the five year project period in amounts ranging from \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year. Project periods for the subrecipients will extend from three to five years in duration, depending on subrecipient characteristics and readiness to rapidly implement the model with fidelity. For example, subrecipients with extensive experience serving the target youth, whose infrastructure is embedded in a strong community collaborative of complementary youth-serving organizations and financial resources to sustain services and the necessary backbone infrastructure, who serve larger numbers of target youth, and who demonstrate stronger preliminary evidence of success may require a shorter timeframe in which to implement the model (minimum three years). These more established subrecipients may also be eligible for higher award amounts, up to \$150,000 per year, to support the full scaling of the model in their geographic coverage area, including an ability to serve more youth and more rigorous evaluation.

ii. Criteria to Determine Subrecipient Applicants Fit with Our Theory of Change -- NC has established a Community Readiness Questionnaire used by communities to identify their current capabilities to implement a place-based PE model. This questionnaire has been used in five rural settings in the past two years, helping NC to identify capacity building needs of these communities in preparation for PE scaling. The questionnaire uses five leading questions followed by examples of the necessary people, structures, and resources the community must have in place to support a PE model. It describes the seven outcome areas required for self-sufficiency and successful transition into adulthood and describes expectations of a PE model community. The leading questions (and their follow-up prompts)

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of the Older Youth System for Community Readiness Assessment are: Q1. Does your community have an existing partnership/group that focuses on prevention, child well-being, Juvenile Justice reform, older youth preparing for adulthood, etc. (e.g. advisory committees, broad based collaborative, other existing coalitions that represent multi-sector leaders) and that meets regularly to exchange information and solve problems? If so, what is the group name, what is its purpose and how often does it meet? Which of the following are included in the membership of the group? (includes a long list of cross-sector key players) What strategies has your community pursued to ensure that all parts of your community are represented in this group? Which of the following applies to the structure of the group? (formal leadership structure, committees, membership opportunities, regular meetings, communication, memorandum of agreement, fiscal agent identified for collaborative work, established policies and procedures, by-laws, formal decision making process, public and/or private funding) Which of the following apply to the functions of the group? (public awareness and information, data collection and data sharing, community assessment and planning, share outcome accountability process, blending of resources/shared fund raising, evaluation of shared programs, addressing local/state policies, promoting evidence based practices, promoting cultural competence and inclusion, implementation of practices for coordination) Please describe one project that this group has worked on collaboratively.

Q2. Many communities have participated in formal assessments and planning efforts. Please indicate which of the following has occurred in your community in the last five years, dates, and geographic boundaries of the effort: (examples are Juvenile Services Plan, Public Health Assessment, Service Array Assessment, Youth Leadership Inventory and others)

Q3. In order to promote self-sufficiency and successful transition into adulthood it is important that an Older Youth System address 7 key areas of focus. Please answer these questions about your community in the following areas: a. Personal and Community Engagement: Youth as partners are key to the work needed to influence an older youth system, are any of these current efforts in your community to support youth involvement in the process? -- youth organized leadership boards; facilitation of peer support or other youth to youth informal mentoring; intentional efforts to engage youth in activities and meetings to address policy changes; system/service coordination; and/or leadership roles within organizations, the community, or their schools; efforts to assist youth in locating needed resources; intentional efforts to assist youth in reducing poverty and early parenting risk factors and promoting youth centered practices; b. Education (same type of services and systems identified for communities to reflect upon), c. Employment, d. Daily Living/Housing and

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Transportation, e. Physical/Dental and Mental Health, f. Permanence, and g. Economic Stability.

Q4. What are other areas or risk factors that an older youth system should be aware of and address with in your community? (examples include unplanned pregnancies, high absenteeism in school, lack of housing choices, transportation issues, health professional shortages, etc.)

Q5. What are strengths that the community currently has that can or is being utilized to help older youth reach self-sufficiency and transition into adulthood more successfully?

c. NC Grantmaking Experience in Open Competition Formats - NC has an established Grant Making Policies and Procedures guide, latest revision September 23, 2014. The entire Grant Making Process from investment strategy to selection of grantees to ongoing monitoring of grantees is advised by key staff, community consultants, internal and external professionals in the issue areas of focus, and approved by a NC Community Impact Workgroup and full Board of Directors. Our current Selection Criteria for application review consists of five primary requirements, all of which mirror SIF selection criteria to some degree.

For about the first ten years of our organization's grantmaking experience we engaged in small-scale competitive grantmaking, in amounts ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 annually and for periods of two to four years, generally. The majority of funds available for subgranting to communities and organizations originated from two federal sources during those early years: Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Fund (federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act dollars delegated to NC by the State of Nebraska), and Family Preservation and Support Act funding, now titled Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act (also delegated by NDHHS to NC). With the adoption of our Child and Youth Well-Being initiative approach seven years ago, our grantmaking processes transitioned to a still competitive, but more strategically aligned and selective award process, wherein single organizations would no longer be funded, only true cross-sector collaboratives with written agreements to function as such, would be eligible for NC grantmaking investments. State and federal partners and funding sources aligned with this overarching framework and strategy and supported it, including the award of bonus funding in 2013 from the CAPTA federal grant for the strategy's proven ability to leverage significantly more public and private funding to achieve desired results as well as the re-direction of the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund dollars to NC for distribution through our grantmaking process versus their former single-organization, single program focus disbursements.

3. PROPOSAL FOR EVALUATION - a. Overview. NC has set a SIF proposal goal to further validate the Project Everlast (PE) model to prove effectiveness at improving life outcomes for at-risk youth transitioning to adulthood. We will work with a third-party evaluator, contracted field evaluators

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working in SIF subrecipient communities and with CNCS-SIF to move the model from preliminary to moderate or strong evidence levels by the end of the five year project period.

The process of moving evaluation forward among subrecipients implementing the PE model in rural NE will start with selecting subrecipients with preliminary evidence of success at serving the target population. We will then use SIF and match funding to engage in, at minimum, a quasi-experimental evaluation design to compare outcomes for young people utilizing PE model products in their communities with non-engaged young people having similar experiences of foster care, juvenile justice, and/or homelessness. A highly qualified third-party evaluator from the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work will contract with NC upon SIF award to help design final evaluation plan methodology and processes alongside our equally qualified in-house evaluator, Catherine Humphries Brown, PhD, our current and to-be hired field evaluators, PE Youth Council member representatives, and CNCS evaluation guides.

This evaluation approach will help identify and validate effective approaches to meeting priority needs of a diverse population in a range of community contexts across Nebraska, it will build the number and quality of high-impact organizations in rural areas that focus resources on results, and it will produce best practices that inform the entire Youth Development Issues field.

b. Capacity to Ensure Successful Evaluation of the Portfolio - To ensure the successful evaluation of the portfolio, NC staff will draw on 1) experience managing and supporting evaluations of past funded program models, 2) experience influencing and supporting subrecipients to use evidence to improve program performance, and 3) demonstrated ability to apply evaluation results to decision-making and investment strategies. In the area of managing and supporting evaluations, Nebraska Children has extensive experience. Specifically, we engage a third party evaluator to assess all of our funded initiatives; this has been a routine practice since 2007. NC also engages a local evaluator for its community collaborative work. These practices both demonstrate our ability to work effectively with different types of evaluators and have given in-house staff experience developing and managing these types of relationships so as to enable successful evaluations.

c. Helping Subrecipients Use Evidence to Improve Performance. NC has processes in place wherein we routinely use data to guide decision-making and investment strategies; since 2009, Nebraska Children has tracked a core set of indicators (e.g. infant mortality rates, child abuse and neglect rates) and used these to identify communities as candidates for investment. NC will also apply a results-based accountability framework (Mark Friedman) at internal and external levels allowing us to more fully link evaluation results to decision-making and investment strategies.

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Furthermore, staff possess evaluation experience and training that will enable them to successfully evaluate their subrecipients' program models. The internal evaluator for PE in our two urban settings is well-versed in the tools used to evaluate PE in this setting, and--having implemented these tools--has a robust understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. This internal evaluator also teaches program evaluation at the graduate level. This understanding will be used to ensure that the approach used to evaluate subrecipient's program models is effective. Lastly, Dr. Claudette Grinnell-Davis from the University of Nebraska's Grace Abbott School of Social Work will be contracted to evaluate the subrecipients' program models.

d. Plan to assess subrecipient applicants for readiness - Evaluation readiness criteria will be identified in the subrecipient selection plan finalized after SIF Recipient orientation in September 2015. At minimum, we will require the following level of readiness at the time of application for a subrecipient award: 1. responsibility for a program or service that has already been shown by credible research to have preliminary evidence of success as defined by SIF, 2. demonstrated experience collecting, reporting and management data, and 3. Experience collecting and managing data in a shared-use environment.

e. Technical Assistance to Subgrantees on Evaluation -- NC will provide technical assistance to subgrantees on participation in the evaluation beginning at the first subgrantee orientation and continuing on a regularly scheduled basis with individual subrecipients based on their level of experience (to be identified in each subrecipient's annual subgrant agreement) and in group convenings held quarterly in-person, web-based, or a combination. This technical assistance will consist of: Providing an overview of the process and requirements of a quasi-experimental evaluation design to achieve a moderate level of evidence, Partnering cooperatively with evaluation personnel to help identify the intervention and matched comparison groups and to clarify and facilitate data collection and management, Helping to address key data challenges that emerge over the course of the grant, Facilitating cross-site groups on data issues, challenges and successes through meetings and webinars, Offering support around best practices in data collection, tracking and reporting methods, and Using data to inform decision making and continuous improvement and to effectively communicate results to multiple stakeholders.

e. Capacity to Implement a Rigorous Evaluation Plan. We will implement a rigorous evaluation plan that will achieve, at minimum, moderate levels of evidence over a three to five year period. Because the capacity of the program in each community is such that it will not initially be able to include all possible participants, potential participants in a given community will be randomly assigned to either

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a waitlist group or a group to take part in the program immediately. This waitlist group will form the comparison group for each given community. Pre-test data will be gathered at the outset of the program from both the participant group and the comparison group. Post-test data will be gathered at the end of 12 months, with some participant data measured more frequently depending on the service the young person is involved in, for example, Opportunity Passport² uses a twice-annual Participant Survey and RentWise housing training uses pre-then-post tests at the inception of the training and at its conclusion which could be a weekend or 6 weeks in length. While sample sizes for a given community may be relatively small, and thus the types of statistical analysis that are appropriate may be limited, this quasi-experimental research design will shed valuable light on the how and the extent to which Project Everlast impacts participants' in the desired outcome areas.

f. Plan to Assess Needs For and Provide TA to Subrecipients. Following approval by CNCS of our Evaluation Plan, we will provide the necessary technical assistance to build subrecipient capacity to fully engage in the local evaluation work, including purchasing / learning / using data collection tools, completing data reporting requirements and timeframes, and developing a thorough understanding of the purposes and beneficial outcomes to be realized by their participation in the Evaluation Plan.

g. Evaluation Budget. An external evaluation budget of \$169,600 is proposed in year one, with additional internal staff evaluation time reflected in personnel costs. Our internal evaluator, Catherine Humphries Brown, Ph.D., Director of Data and Research, is well experienced in working with evaluation budgets in federal and nonprofit institutions, having come to NC from the U.S. GAO with her work there focused on nonprofit effectiveness, and believes the budget amount proposed is sufficient based on our initial understanding of the evaluation requirements under SIF, which we acknowledge may change as we learn more as an awarded SIF Recipient.

SIF subrecipient applicants will be expected to budget within their grant proposals to us, the following evaluation costs at minimum, which we also acknowledge may change as we learn more about CNCS evaluation expectations if selected as a Recipient: subrecipient data collection and reporting software (product to be determined) and licenses for the community-based service providers that will need them, personnel time to collect, enter, report and analyze evaluation data in cooperation with the NC field and head evaluators, including the third-party contractor, and personnel time and any other resources necessary for effective application of evaluation findings in the implementation and administration of their local PE model (such as professional development of community providers around cultural or linguistic needs of some youth, or adoption of an evidence-based practice model for dual-generation supports for youth who are pregnant or parenting, etc.). Other evaluation related

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costs, such as data analysis, published reports of evaluation findings and their dissemination, and technical assistance to build capacity of subrecipients to conduct evaluation with adherence to SIF expectations are included in our Recipient budget. The evaluation budgets will likely change over time and will be re-examined annually prior to execution of the subsequent year's subrecipient contract.

4. PROPOSAL FOR GROWING SUBRECIPIENT IMPACT- Since selected subrecipients will already be high functioning lead entities and collaborative partnerships with strong fiscal and management controls in place, including prior experience implementing evidence-based or -informed practices for the target population, capacity building technical assistance will focus more intensely on 1)

Implementation of the PE model with fidelity to enhance program delivery and evaluation at the community level, 2) Response to the program goal of increasing, expanding or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified for target youth in their community, and 3)

Enabling the subrecipient to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the SIF funded grant period ends.

Each subrecipient community will complete the Older Youth System for Community Readiness Assessment as well as a review of the CNCS Capacity Building Measures and activities included in the CNCS Resource Center's Strategic Plan Framework for Capacity Building document. Following completion and review by the subrecipient and NC staff, a formal Evaluation Assistance Plan will be prepared. The TA Plan will be unique to each subrecipient's identified capacity needs to implement, manage, monitor, and sustain the Project Everlast model.

Capacity building supports may be delivered through in-person or Internet-based training and workshops; peer learning opportunities among our SIF subrecipients, CYWB communities, urban PE initiatives; and shared learning opportunities through other state and national resources.

Organizational Capability

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY 1. Background and Staff Capacity - a. Record of Success and Resources. NC has realized much success in uniting communities, government leaders and agencies, affected young people and families, and the private sector in the work of prevention and early intervention of life challenges faced by our most vulnerable children and youth. NC seeks and applies the voice of youth with foster care experience at every level of decision making and gives them skills to advocate for all youth in care. Organizationally, we use a proven system of community grant-making, promotion of evidence-based strategies, technical assistance to community collaboratives and direct service providers, policy and advocacy work, knowledge sharing, and communication strategies

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across sectors to increase Nebraska's collective effectiveness at ensuring every child has opportunity to reach their full potential.

NC began its work around improving outcomes for foster youth with sponsorship of the Nebraska Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) in 2001. Since then, we have implemented several initiatives designed to help foster youth successfully transition to adulthood. A few examples of our success in helping NE move toward improved outcomes for youth with foster care experience include: 1. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative invited NC in August 2008 into a co-investment partnership, 2. Completion of a Supportive Systems for Rural Homeless Youth (SSRHY) grant in partnership with NDHHS for 11 counties in NE's Panhandle. Results included roll out of three youth transitions services in Nebraska and the Panhandle: Bridges to Independence, a NDHHS program which extends services and support for foster youth aging out of the system until age 21; Transitional Services for Youth 16-24, a privately funded extension of services to older youth who are on their own; The older youth system and host home developed in the Panhandle is being replicated in other geographic areas in Nebraska, 3. Compassion Capital Fund-Communities Empowering Youth (CEY) grant award for organizational capacity building work with youth-serving organizations in three neighborhoods of South Omaha that experience disproportionate rates of juvenile and adult crime, child abuse, poverty, school dropouts, and other youth risks. NC served as an intermediary organization, helping to build the organizational capacity of a broad range of youth-serving organizations in four critical capacity building areas of Leadership, Organizational, and Program Development, and Community Engagement, and 4. The Nebraska Foster Youth Initiative, the predecessor to PE, which built Nebraska's foundation for improving supports for youth transitioning from foster care to independent living through several activities and projects. The Nebraska Departments of Education and HHS have contracted a combination of federal and state funds to NC for an array of work in positive youth development. NC in turn leverages resources from the private sector to extend the reach of limited public dollars.

b. Grantmaking Experience and Outcomes. Since 1997, NC has provided grants to communities to keep children out of the welfare system and other higher end systems of care. We have subgranted just over \$29 million through 357 grants to community organizations to ensure children are safe, ready for and successful in school and are supported in their transition to adulthood. Over the years, we have added specific initiatives focused on targeted age groups and evidence based strategies to our technical assistance and funding portfolio. NC's portfolio includes: quality early childhood care and education, before and after school services, social emotional supports, and older youth transitional

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services and support systems. Of these disbursements, 44% (\$13M) has been granted specifically for Project Everlast model formation and implementation in Omaha, Lincoln, and greater Nebraska.

c. Data and Evaluation Experience. NC has been engaged in third-party evaluation of our subgrantee community collaboratives since 2011. Community-wide change which results from implementing the Child and Youth Well-Being framework has been monitored and documented by a University of Nebraska system evaluator (University of Nebraska Medical Center-Munroe-Meyer Institute-Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation) with the beginning class being our year 2011 subgrantees. Community change is measured over time as collaboratives build capacity to develop broad-based collective impact infrastructures to support increased accountability of community systems and results for children, youth and families. All local collaborations include representation from child welfare, behavioral health, public health, and many others and all of them share a capacity building focus on 1. Reducing child abuse and neglect and keeping children and youth out of the child welfare system, 2. Readiness for Results-Based Accountability (RBA) implementation, 3. Local Strengths and Documented Gaps in Services based on individual community assessments and planning to develop prevention plans, and 4. Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices with Measures.

In 2007, Nebraska Children provided leadership in bringing state and local public and private agency leaders together to develop a set of indicators that could be measured and tracked to improve child well-being. Twelve indicators were selected based on their communication, proxy, data, and action power (Mark Friedman RBA Framework). Indicators include: infant mortality, quality early childhood program enrollment, abuse and neglect, children and youth in out of home care, healthy weight, teen pregnancy, domestic violence, juvenile arrests, substance use/abuse, high school and post-secondary graduation, employment, permanency and mobility within the foster care system. NC compiles the indicator data by county to support Nebraska communities in assessments, planning and evaluation. Data is compared to state rates.

Data was and continues to be collected at the community level using a system-focused tool developed by the University of Kansas titled Online Documentation and Support System (ODSS). Additional tools measuring change in subgrantee communities include The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) developed by the President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for states to monitor progress in adopting evidence-based programs in child abuse prevention work and The Wilder Collaborative Factors Inventory which uses a Likert Scale to measure community informant perception of collaborative group structure and functioning across 26 factors. Communities have

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added other performance measurement and evaluation tools based on evidence-based practices implemented to address their priority issues.

Common performance measures (process and outcome) monitored by all original CYWB subgrantees include indicators in these broader categories: Improvements in child well-being for the general population; Children do not enter the child welfare system; Family protective factors are enhanced; Increased Informal supports; Parent engagement and leadership is enhanced; A broad-based community collaborative that holds members accountable and is focused on collective impact; Public and private systems function to maximize opportunities for children and families, support prevention, support informal support systems and work to prevent the need for more intense levels of intervention.

An example of data generated from one community, Dodge County, includes: Protective Factors in 56% of the families have significantly improved (Based on benchmark of .5 change on 7 point Likert Scale), To date, only one family out of 90 families using their Collaborative strategies has had a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect, and in Dodge County, substantiated child abuse and neglect has decreased (8 to 4.8) in three years (2010 -- 2013) while across NE, substantiated child abuse and neglect has decreased (11.1 to 8.3) in the same period.

Our third-party evaluator prepares six month and year-end reports of all funded CYWB communities including the evidence-based and evidence-informed practices they've implemented to achieve population outcomes, providing findings to NC and our contracted field evaluators who share results with their assigned communities to inform ongoing continuous quality improvement and timely, data-driven decision-making by the collaborative.

d. Current Organizational Budget. Nebraska Children's approved 2015 budget is \$10,779,287.

The percentage of this budget the SIF federal dollars would represent is 8.5% and 15.7% for SIF plus our private match (2015 budget amount + two million dollars). Since we have significant experience in building our own organizational capacity (identifying and hiring employees, identifying and developing community and state level resources within a collaborative context), monitoring outcomes (using evaluation resources), and reporting outcomes (grant administration and communication strategies) the implications for our organization are that the SIF grant will enable us to do more of our work, and we believe we can do this additional work effectively with the hiring of staff and internal supports identified in the budget proposal, using both SIF and private match funds committed for this purpose.

e. Personnel Qualifications and Capacity. To conserve space, only the top leadership staff responsible

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for our Project Everlast model and the Nebraska Children organization as a whole are identified here. Additional staff bios and job descriptions for new or current positions would be provided to CNCS at your request.

President / CEO - Mary Jo Pankoke is the original President and CEO of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Mary Jo oversees all areas of operation for NC, works with the Board of Directors and participates in all Board workgroups, including Community Impact and Evaluation. She represents NC on national and state level boards and committees concerning child well-being with a particular focus on children and youth involved in our nation's child welfare system. She serves as our organization's primary liaison to state government and has built a level of trust within the legislative and executive branches that is of immeasurable value in moving our SIF goals forward. She provides leadership and strategic direction for staff while being an active member of the Executive Team which oversees the financial and administrative management of the Foundation. Mary Jo earned her B.S. in Education and completed graduate work in Psychology at the University of Nebraska--Lincoln. She will provide high-level oversight of the SIF project, supervising both the CFO and VP of Community Impact positions. She assures our Board of Directors are knowledgeable of SIF responsibilities and investments and will steward relationships at all levels to sustain and grow the work of NC into the future.

Chief Financial Officer - Jack Round is an experienced chief executive specializing in nonprofit finance, operations and information technology. He has overseen financial operations at several large nonprofit organizations in Omaha, NE as well as multiple for-profit technology companies. Jack received his BS at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and his MBA at Creighton University. He attained his CPA and CMA designations in 1991. Jack worked with project staff to complete the YR1 budget contained in this proposal and has a strong understanding of the financial compliance requirements of SIF funding.

Vice President of Community Impact - Jennifer Skala is the Vice President of Community Impact and has been with the Foundation since 2006. Jennifer is responsible for direction and oversight of several NC initiatives, including community grantmaking, training and technical assistance through our Child and Youth Well-Being and Project Everlast initiatives. She has been our consistent liaison with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative as a co-investment partner site for their Opportunity Passport₂ and other youth in transition work. She is an experienced practitioner in community organizing and assessment using Service Array and FSG's Collective Impact approaches and tools, the use of evidence-based practices to address priority needs, and in the collection, analysis and application

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of quality data to inform decision making at organizational and community levels. Jenny has been on the forefront of youth-driven change in the policies and practices affecting young people with foster care and juvenile justice experience in Nebraska and is the champion of total revamping of the way older youth with foster care experience are supported in their transitions to adulthood in our state. She holds her B.S. in Consumer and Family Science and her Master's in Health Education/Public Health from the University of Nebraska--Lincoln.

Jason Feldhaus, Associate Vice President, Project Everlast Expansion - Prior to taking on the statewide expansion of Project Everlast almost two years ago, Jason was a Project Everlast Omaha Youth Advisor and Program Officer overseeing staff working directly with youth. Previous work includes positions at two Omaha Group Homes for foster youth and time as a Social Services Worker for NDHHS. Jason holds degrees from Creighton University in Organizational Communication and History. For the past year and a half, Jason has been building rural Nebraska community relationships and capacity to change the way services and supports are organized, funded and delivered for target youth. His first-hand experience with planning and implementation of Project Everlast in both Omaha and Lincoln gives him the knowledge and skill set to help rural Nebraska implement the Project Everlast model with fidelity.

Catherine Brown Humphries, Director of Data and Research -Catherine comes to Nebraska Children from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) where, as a senior analyst, she led and managed research teams to provide Congress with objective, nonpartisan information and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government. Most recently, as a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, she conducted evaluation work supporting the Omaha Community Foundation and policy work supporting the university's engagement with the Nebraska State Legislature. Catherine holds a Master's Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the United States Naval War College, a Master's Degree in anthropology from the University of Kentucky, and a Master's Degree in International Relations from the University of Kentucky. She also holds a Ph.D. in Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where her dissertation research focused on foundation-funded nonprofit capacity building. Catherine will lead our in-house SIF project evaluation work and will serve as the liaison with our contracted third-party evaluator and local evaluators in the field to take NC's Project Everlast positive youth development model from preliminary evidence level to moderate or strong evidence level during the SIF project period.

Claudette Grinnel-Davis, Third Party Evaluator. Dr. Grinnell-Davis is an Assistant Professor at the

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Grace Abbott School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha. She completed a joint PhD in social work and psychology at the University of Michigan; her dissertation looked at understanding the interrelatedness of risk factors of parental involvement in the child welfare system and predicting how these risk factors affect both ongoing child development and child welfare systems decision making toward substantiation for abuse and neglect. She is rigorously trained in both methodology and evaluation design as well as advanced statistical methods including propensity score matching, survival analysis, latent class/profile analysis, and latent growth curve modeling. Her most recent evaluation experience involved measuring the effectiveness of a motivation-to-change parent management training clinical trial (RCT) on the parenting practices of criminal justice-involved parents; this project was funded by an R01 grant through the National Institute of Drug Abuse. In addition, Dr. Grinnell-Davis has frequently consulted with other researchers and programs on evaluation methods and has taught evaluation to masters-level social work students at Eastern Michigan University. She will be contracted by NC to conduct the external validation of the PE model after notice of federal CNCS-SIF award. A sufficient amount has been budgeted from our cash match funding to cover her evaluation costs. She will engage in initial consulting with our in-house evaluation staff around establishing fidelity and data integrity in relationship to the theory of change and logic model and will devote substantial time at each primary data collection point (twice annually) to analysis and findings reporting, and lastly, she will complete a final analysis and report write up.

2. Subrecipient Support, Monitoring and Oversight. NC will fulfill its responsibility, on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the award, to monitor the activities of subrecipients in accordance with the governing agreement, to assure that awarded funds are used for authorized purposes in compliance with the provisions of the agreement, and to ensure that performance goals are achieved. The SIF Project Director will facilitate a monitoring review team of key SIF personnel to jointly determine the frequency and scope of SIF subrecipient monitoring procedures after SIF Recipient orientation and a thorough understanding of requirements for such under the CNCS Cooperative Agreement is achieved post-award.

A risk-based approach to subrecipient monitoring will be used with the frequency and intensity of monitoring driven by 1) the terms of the grant award from SIF to NC and from NC to the subrecipients and 2) criteria identified in the subrecipient selection criteria and performance expectations. Progress monitoring, reports, and deliverables related to subrecipient goal attainment will be determined using a variety of means. In year one, since it is truncated by the selection process,

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the monitoring process will utilize more frequent, informal progress reports which will be documented by NC staff and consultants during TA contacts via phone, email, web-based or face-to-face communications or at group orientation and compliance trainings. More formal technical reports or other compliance deliverables may be required at the end of the first SIF grant fiscal year (August 31, 2016), and will certainly be required at the end of the first full project year of the subrecipient's grant award (approximately February 1, 2016-January 2017 based on their selection six months post-SIF award to NE in Sept. 2015).

Once subrecipients are orientated and have begun the PE model implementation process, formal technical reports will be required every six month period, with monthly TA check-ins by NC staff and consultants and a written quarterly progress summary prepared and emailed to NC by the subrecipient lead at least quarterly.

a. Subrecipient Planning and Implementation Experience. At minimum, subrecipients will be required to have engaged in a thorough, cross-sector qualitative and quantitative assessment of community needs and conditions relevant to children, youth, and families, with particular focus on those involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems of care. Generally accepted assessment tools, processes (surveying, existing source data analysis, key informant interviews, focus groups), and priority setting guides such as Service Array and various public health assessments will be reviewed for acceptability. Preferably, subrecipients will have formulated at least initial priorities, goals and action plans to address needs identified in the assessment process they previously conducted. Recentness of the assessment process will also be considered.

Subrecipient candidates must also have had prior experience implementing youth services, preferably for older youth in care, with at least preliminary levels of evidence of the effectiveness of those services documented.

b. Evaluation of Subrecipient Performance. Subrecipients progress will be monitored by NC staff at designated intervals occurring throughout the year using SIF Performance Measures and goals and outcomes specific to their level of readiness for PE model implementation at initiation and at annual contract renewal. Performance review frequency and content will be identified in each annual contract. Capacity building supports will be provided regularly with in-person consultation by NC staff and contractors occurring at least monthly and based on their performance review. All official performance reviews will be documented in writing by NC staff and consultants working with them.

c. Technical Assistance for Federal Grant Compliance. Upon review of the SIF NOFA and supporting information such as the Financial Management and Compliance Overview document, NC is confident

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in our ability to articulate and monitor our own and our subrecipients' compliance with CNCS-SIF rules and regulations. While we already offer our current subgrantees grant compliance training covering state and federal rules governing the origination of funds the subgrantees receive, we are aware of a couple new areas of TA that will need to be provided to our SIF subrecipients, including an enhanced Criminal Background Check (FBI element). NC expects to learn the full extent of all additional compliance requirements SIF will impose at the new SIF Recipient orientation in September 2015 and as part of the post-award conferencing to complete the Subrecipient Selection Plan.

It is anticipated that most of the subrecipients selected for PE model implementation will have some degree of experience in administering federal or state funded grant programs, assuming a base level of compliance with typical grant requirements such as reporting, financial accountability, allowable and non-allowable use of public funds, and personnel management issues such as timekeeping and hiring and firing procedures in compliance with state and federal laws. However, to assure compliance specific to SIF funding, we will provide direct technical assistance to all subrecipients in the form of a mandatory subrecipient orientation and compliance training prior to the subrecipient initiating SIF-funded activities, not later than one month after subrecipient selection occurs.

d. Capacity Building Support for Scaling, Evaluation and Goal Attainment. -- NC staff and community consultants, our third-party evaluator, PE Youth Councils, operational urban PE models, and SIF subrecipients will serve as the key informants and participants in PE model scaling, evaluation and goal attainment. An overarching PE Leadership Team comprised of representatives of the aforementioned groups will guide implementation of the PE model in unserved communities, along with other key stakeholders such as NE DHHS and the Office of Probation (responsible for juvenile justice youth) due to their responsibilities in serving the target population. The Leadership Team will oversee the implementation plan process, make adjustments to the process as needed, ensure that all vital stakeholders are involved, provide overall guidance and vision to the effort, and work to ensure that facilitative mechanisms are made available to all involved in the effort to achieve the project's desired outcomes through strategic capacity building supports.

NC staff, youth involved in targeted systems, community-based PE evaluators, and experienced PE model implementers from Omaha and Lincoln will provide technical assistance to community collaboratives throughout the project period. Other TA resources will also be garnered for capacity building supports as may be available through Jim Casey Youth Opportunities initiative and other experts in the youth development field.

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Technical assistance and capacity building within each subrecipient collaborative will be provided by NC to inform intervention practice model development and implementation specific to youth engagement, equity, cultural relevance, social capital issues. Additionally, capacity building support will be given to develop consistency in approach while respecting the uniqueness of each subrecipient community.

NC PE staff and community consultants working to scale and evaluate PE functions will serve as communication conduits and synthesizers of information and products, provide detailed technical assistance to subrecipients and report on a scheduled basis to the Leadership Team. Within the first quarter of the SIF project period, and in cooperation with CNCS-SIF, the PE Leadership Team (sans the subrecipients at this point) will develop final workflow processes and a timeline for scaling PE statewide, creating the final Scaling Plan.

3. Strategy for Sustainability. The sustainability of a PE community collaborative comes from focusing on outcomes instead of staff and programs. It requires integrating evidence-based practices into existing services and sharing outcomes across partnering organizations, as well as changing community context and the way communities can do business with regard to achieving positive youth development outcomes. The PE model requires a sustainable infrastructure which can be achieved with capacity building support around the key elements of Collective Impact strategies and community-based youth services.

Financial sustainability supports will be provided by NC and others in cooperation with subrecipients in the form of capacity building around the braiding of existing resources, identification of evidence-based work that make the most efficient use of effective prevention and early intervention resources reducing expenditures on higher-end, changes to policy allowing more flexibility and the un-tethering of existing funding sources from siloed or restricted use, and technical assistance from NC resource development staff experienced in grantwriting and fundraising from both public and private sources as methods to meet the local match obligation and to sustain the work of the system infrastructure, including ongoing direct services for youth.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. Budget Justification. Reasonableness and Sufficiency in Supporting our Plan -- The total year one (YR1) budget of \$2,000,000 (\$2M) (SIF \$1M plus Cash Match \$1M) is allocated in a manner to assure peak performance of both Nebraska Children as the Recipient and grantmaking intermediary

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and of high-functioning community collaboratives ready to implement the Project Everlast model in rural settings across Nebraska within six months of their subaward. Categorical allocations of the YR1 budget by federal funding requested and private cash match show these proportions of costs assigned to each fund source: Personnel (salaries and fringe combined) 12% of costs to SIF, 88% of personnel costs to private match, with the Personnel category comprising 26.4% of the total YR1 budget; Staff Travel, local and national, 56.8% SIF request, 43.2% cash match with the Staff Travel category comprising 1.2% of the total YR1 budget; Supplies include new computer hardware (laptops and iPads) for SubR and NC field staff data collection and day-to-day work in communities, updated website and security and telecommunications/webinar platform at NC to support enhanced communications and data sharing with SubRs at a cost breakout of \$17,024 CNCS and \$10,000 Grantee match for a total \$27,024 or 1.35% of the total budget; Contractual and Consultant Services including a Third-Party Evaluator at a generous estimate of \$150,000 for external evaluation services to be paid with private match, local field evaluators working with subrecipients and providing substantial TA, and our internal lead evaluator and PE evaluation specialist, plus information technology (IT) support are included in this category. Only 1.6% of the category cost is allocated to SIF, with 98.4% of contractual costs assigned to private match, which they readily support; H. Other Costs include \$5,300 for criminal background checks for an estimated 100 persons in YR1, including all NC staff, consultants working in SubR communities and SubR personnel in the field at 100 persons x \$18 for FBI Fingerprint Checks for \$1,800 and NC's Regular Background Checks for all Recipient personnel, consultants and partners involved in the SIF project at 100 persons x \$35 each check for \$3,500; Training costs budgeted are those payable services that cannot be provided by NC staff or no-cost resources like state and national Resource Centers and include costs such as travel and lodging, speaking fees or honorarium, and training materials required for trainers and speakers with expertise in specific content areas, e.g. trauma-informed approaches, cultural competency, legal guidance around advocacy and public policy issues, and/or for specific curricula and programs SubR's may select for youth service delivery within the 7 outcome domains, these services may be provided at the twice-annual SubR convenings and/or on demand as needed, the cost allocation is 100% attributable to SIF dollars, comprising 0.9% of the YR1 budget; Data Collection / Evaluation Tools budgeted for under H. Other Costs, in an amount of \$25,000 CNCS and \$25,000 Grantee match consists of planned expenditures for SubR data collection and evaluation tools to be identified after Recipient consultation with the procured 3rd party evaluator and finalization of the Recipient's comprehensive Evaluation Plan crafted in partnership with CNCS-SIF's Research and Evaluation Team. We have

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intentionally allocated this budget line item for tool purchases to assure this critical element of the SIF project is sufficiently funded for each SubR community. These dollars may be awarded to selected SubR's over and above their minimum \$100k-\$150k subgrant awards. Additionally, this line item may be used to pay for data analysis software the Recipient may need in-house for data/eval purposes, which will be identified in our Final Evaluation Plan developed with CNCS-SIF; The Evaluation category comprises just 2.5% of the YR1 budget, but as mentioned, the majority of evaluation costs are itemed under Contractual and Consultant Services for the Third Party Evaluator and local field evaluators, additionally, the internal lead evaluator and PE evaluation specialist are included in the Personnel costs. Evaluation expenses in the category line item are for the purchase of data collection and reporting tools for evaluation purposes and are evenly split 50/50 SIF and private match, comprising 2.5% of the YR1 budget; Subawards to communities equal 46% of the total YR1 budget and are allocated at 88.5% of the cost to SIF (\$819,053 SIF) and 11.5% to cash match (\$106,428) exceeding the SIF requirement that at least 80% of federal dollars be re-granted to subrecipients; and finally, our Indirect Cost category is based on 10% of direct costs with the \$25,000 cap on each subaward considered. We do not have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a federal agency. The federal share of our indirect cost calculation is only 3% of the SIF funding request, with 97% of our overhead operating costs covered by the private match allocation and our indirect overhead expenses comprise only 9% of combined federal and private dollars in YR1.

2. Capacity to Raise Match -- Between the years 2007 and 2014, NC secured and administered 107 privately funded grants and contracts in an amount of \$35,614,681 as leverage dollars to another 127 publicly funded (federal and state) grants totaling \$25,061,659 for a total 234 grant and contract portfolio worth \$60,676,340. In our first 10 years of existence (prior to 2007) we had already awarded over \$7 million in grants to Nebraska communities and Native American Tribes in addition to providing technical assistance to build local capacity and the many statewide initiatives we carried out using both universal and targeted approaches to strengthen the system of care for children and families.

Our single largest private fundraising success was achieved over a five year period concluding in December 2011. State legislation in 2005 created our first Early Childhood Education Endowment in Nebraska. NC was competitively awarded a state Dept. of Education contract to complete a pre-legislative public awareness campaign to build statewide public support for high quality Pre-K education for at-risk children. Upon passage of the legislation, NC was selected by the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees to raise \$20 million in private funding as the required match to a \$40

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million public investment to the endowment. The charge was heavy upon NC, as without the \$20M in private match, the newly created endowment for our state's most vulnerable birth to three year olds would cease to exist. In December 2011, NE fulfilled our charge and the Early Childhood Education Endowment was officially created.

Specific to Project Everlast initiative fundraising, we have successfully leveraged over \$5 million since the model emerged from the youth-led Omaha Independent Living Plan assessment and revamping process in 2007. Furthermore, our Child and Youth Well-being initiative communities have themselves leveraged over \$5 million in community-based funding for their priority projects, with a total of \$475,463 leveraged by just five CYWB initiative communities in 2013 alone.

Even our organization's by-laws state that we are charged with: Assisting Nebraska communities and organizations in raising funds and revenues to address locally defined issues affecting the healthful development of children and the healthy functioning of their families.

We also believe in the necessity of communities generating their own leverage to outside funds invested in their well-being and promote this belief in our grantmaking requirements. We further view this local commitment as an opportunity to help rural communities make the best of their investments by building long-term local capacity to create, evaluate and sustain a collaborative, prevention-focused, evidence-based local continuum of care for children, youth, and families that is locally sustainable and not dependent on changing public funding environments. While we won't argue against more philanthropic assets flowing into the rural communities we serve, NC views rural philanthropy differently, more as a system that helps communities help themselves by building capacity to integrate existing resources more efficiently and across sectors and to pursue and apply new resources that have proven impact on problem solving and are sustainable. During the SIF funded period, community subrecipients will be required to invest cash match in amounts equal to or greater than their SIF award, which will range from \$100,000 to \$150,000 per subrecipient annually. Meeting local cash match requirements will be a condition of subrecipient eligibility to receive annual continuation funding through the SIF project.

Clarification Summary

1. Describe the landscape of existing programs serving rural youth in Nebraska.

The current landscape is based on a regional approach that uses population centers and is conducted by outreach programming. The state Department of Health and Human Services, Mental and Behavioral Health, and juvenile Probation all use regional designs to help create and sustain networks

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of available services to rural communities, youth and families. This type of resource allocation has created a wide range of available services in each geographic area of the state. Some of these differences are by design due to community nuances and needs and some are due to lack of available resources or staffing.

PE has been able to align many of these services and providers across the state to help find consensus and best practices to serving older rural youth. Through a partnership with the DHHS, PE oversees most of the Chafee funding for Nebraska, creating a partnership with DHHS and allowing us the ability to fund subgrantees in ways that benefit the rural community's needs. Services are aligned at both the local level through direct funding and at a state level by coordinating the local resources with the capacity and ability of DHHS. The ability to fill in service gaps with private funding creates the flexibility needed to address each community's nuances, while taking advantage of a statewide funding source that creates consistency across regions.

PE has also developed relationships with the Dept. of Labor to design community axis opportunities to Workforce Investment funds for youth. PE's ability to focus multiple community level partners in a cooperative effort with the state Labor Dept. makes it possible for youth to take advantage of the state resources and have the local relationships to stay connected to services and supports. This same process is being used with voc-rehab, adult education providers, public and mental health systems, and the homeless continuum of care providers.

Overall, the rural challenge for PE expansion is availability of flexible resources needed to develop enough capacity at the local level to continue to plug new communities into this multi-level system approach. The local infrastructure must be capable of supporting its personal and organizational relationships in order to take full advantage of the statewide resources. The challenge is the ability to strengthen local community outreach, programming best practices, and system capacity which ultimately makes it possible for state and other resources to penetrate and reach youth more effectively.

2. With the lack of infrastructure in rural areas, describe how you will attract viable high performing nonprofits to work in these areas.

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NC uses a Community Readiness Questionnaire discussed in the original SIF proposal to help communities identify current capabilities to implement PE. The questionnaire has been used in 5 rural settings in the past two years. Key indicators of viability are their demonstrated ability to share accountability across organizations and to have a thorough understanding of financing mechanisms and management of state and federal funds, among other indicators as described in the original SIF proposal. Our experience with the readiness tool shows there are nonprofits and collaboratives in rural areas capable of PE scaling with the provision of capacity building assistance. Some of these include Community Action Agencies, Continuum of Care collaboratives, regional behavioral health service infrastructures, and specific community or region-based collaboratives organized to reach broadly across sectors to address health and human service needs of its constituents.

We will attract viable subrecipient candidates by

- a. using numerous media formats (NC and partner websites, email alerts, news releases in print-audio-visual formats) to inform prospective subrecipients of the SIF award, purposes, subrecipient requirements, and desired outcomes
- b. making verbal announcements and presentations on PE expansion using SIF and match funding at group meetings attended by NC and PE staff,
- c. broadly disseminating SIF scaling plans and assigning NC staff to field questions from prospective applicants to assure thorough understanding of goals and expectations of subrecipients, and
- d. using our public partnerships with the state departments to Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, and Public Health for extended outreach to eligible candidates.

3. Please describe the capacity and ability to recruit and engage the 1,500 students you plan to serve in rural areas.

The PE model's core component is voluntary participation by youth with all services and supports. Voluntary participation creates several different levels of recruitment and engagement that are based on high and low touch relationships. In the proposal, 1,500 youth would be recruited and engaged in PE services and supports in the first two and half years. This is based on low and high touch relationships. Low touch engagement in services is defined as an individual who receives at least one PE service for duration of at least an orientation to services to less than 5 months. Due to the short time of interaction these individuals are considered participants, but, due to their personal decision

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that they lack further need or commitment, have pulled away from services. These individuals are still valuable to the model because they tend to return for continued services and supports at a later time. It is essential to create an open door approach and ongoing supportive recruitment to make sure they are encouraged to return when services are necessary, however program evaluation for this group is limited.

It is also vital that PE breaks down the 1,500 participants to also identify and track high touch individuals. High touch participation is defined as an individual who participates in one or more PE services or supports for duration of at least 6 months, is available and participates in the evaluation process. PE anticipates serving a minimum of 300 rural youth through high touch services and supports each year.

4. Since a 3rd party evaluator from the UNO School of Social Work has been identified, were federal procurement expectations adhered to?

NC has worked with the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) Munroe-Meyer Institute since 2007 in the ongoing evaluation of PE Omaha. For the SIF proposal, we consulted with UNO researchers to help plan our PE scaling evaluation strategies. The individual from UNO named in our SIF proposal, Claudette Grinnel-Davis, is from their School of Social Work. Her prior experience lent itself to advising our in-house Research and Evaluation Director in strategizing our intended evaluation approach. We consulted with Ms. Grinnel-Davis during SIF proposal planning but did not enter into any verbal or written agreements to engage her or UNO exclusively.

Within that context, we stated we would "contract with a highly qualified third-party evaluator from the UNO School of Social Work upon SIF award to help design final evaluation plan methodology and processes alongside our equally qualified in-house evaluator" (page 17), considering her qualifications and the fact that no SIF federal dollars would be used for payment of evaluation services to be rendered. Since submission, we now understand two points of clarification regarding securing an independent evaluator to work with us on SIF scaling: 1) regardless of payment source CFR Part 200 or OMB Circular A-110 Procurement Standards require formal procurement processes be followed if the evaluation is conducted within a federally funded project and 2) to validate the PE model as an evidence-based approach, a truly independent third-party evaluator is preferred, meaning our

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relational proximity to UNO historically may pose a conflict of interest in conducting a non-biased, independent evaluation of SIF scaling.

Considering these two understandings, we clarify our original SIF proposal to state we will engage in a formal procurement process upon notice of grant award to identify and select an independent, 3rd party evaluator with qualifications to help NC work cooperatively with CNCS SIF research and evaluation team members to design, implement, analyze and report out on a scientifically structured and administered formal evaluation of our PE model over a 5 year project period.

5. Please describe your existing data collection processes and management.

PE has used the Opportunity Passport Participant Survey (OPPS) designed by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) to measure youth outcomes in the Omaha area since 2009. The survey is administered by JCYOI staff nationally among all OP participants twice annually in April and October. PE staff and partners host multiple survey events in April and October to heighten youth's attention to survey completion and make contact with as many OP enrolled youth as possible to encourage them to complete the survey. Youth who complete the survey receive a \$40 stipend. PE Omaha has a high percentage of young people complete the OPPS, with 82.68% taking it in April 2015.

To gather data on a broader range of young people in PE, but not enrolled in the OP program, NC created a nearly identical version of the OPPS via SurveyMonkey. The SurveyMonkey instrument was first used with PE youth in April 2010. Local youth service providers reach out to their youth in April and October to align with the OPPS survey and offer \$20 gift cards for completion.

Survey completion is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged.

Once OPPS data are received from JCYOI, the PE Director of Program Evaluation combines it with SurveyMonkey responses and imports the data into PSP software for univariate and bivariate analysis. She prepares reports following each survey administration highlighting demographic information and key outcomes and presents these reports at quarterly PE Leadership Team meetings. Reports are used by the Leadership Team as a method of measuring progress in achieving desired youth outcomes.

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Note - Please refer to our response in clarifications section B.5. for descriptions of how data is entered online by PE youth as well as descriptions of how the information is compiled, analyzed, and shared.

NC is currently working with other communities across the state to implement similar methods of gathering outcome data for PE youth as the model is scaled.

In addition to OPPS/SurveyMonkey, several youth service programs that PE contracts with use specific methods of evaluating their programs impact which is also collected by PE for reporting on youth outcomes.

6. Provide additional detail on the strategy for sustainability of subgrantees.

NC believes that a sustainable PE model can only be achieved if communities are wholly invested in the model's philosophy and approach. Working with ready communities already serving target youth with measurable success, it is our role to broaden community knowledge about the values inherent to a prevention-focused, youth-informed system including cost-savings and returns on investment, and to assist in building cross-sector capacity necessary for institutionalization of the operating model within their community framework.

We believe long-term sustainability of an effective PE model exists when:

- a) collective impact conditions are institutionalized within a strong community infrastructure,
- b) prevention is the driver of all efforts,
- c) communities share risks and rewards across sectors and agree to change their focus from preservation of individual organization structures and programs to shared outcomes and co-investments which promote sustainability by saving dollars spent on duplicative administrative and service provision efforts,
- d) evidence-based programs, policies and strategies are adopted by communities and built into and across youth organizations via capacity building, yielding greater return on investment and preventing the need for most costly outlays on higher-end systems of care and chronic long-term reliance on public assistance programs, and
- e) active, well-supported community PE youth councils exist, providing constant infusion of fresh

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youth voice, current relevant perspectives and changing needs of young people requiring community attention.

NC acknowledges it takes community systems longer than the 3-5 year SIF period to achieve all indicators of sustainability as described above. Our experience in urban communities indicates a longer timeframe is needed to reach a sustainable state of operations even in philanthropically rich environments. Our system-building work for PE expansion in rural areas indicates that trust-building and breaking down historical barriers to collaboration such as small organizations competing locally for sparse funding takes time and even personnel changes to overcome.

The collective impact framework that NC will provide support and technical assistance on in communities focuses on using and aligning existing resources first and then working together to fill gaps by pursuing new resources together. NC will also provide guidance on the decision making process that focuses on sustainability first. New resources should not be pursued unless there is a plan for sustainability by multiple partners.

In addition, NC commits support to subrecipient communities beyond the SIF period with longer term T-TA, peer learning groups and other services and financial supports from in-house and external resources available to us and our partners. For example, NC is the state's delegate for federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funds which provide community resources to serve young people in care as they transition to adult living. NC also administers federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act dollars which can be used to support community capacity building and prevention system infrastructure and services. Each of these funding streams can be influenced to support the strategies and infrastructure needed in communities to improve youth outcomes.

NC has experience of demonstrating effectiveness with policymakers so that proven strategies can be built into publicly funded programs. We are also able to bring private resources to communities from youth-in-transition knowledge experts such as the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and funding from philanthropists committed to transforming life trajectories of Nebraska most at-risk young people.

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B. Evaluation Issues for Clarification

1. Please address the issue or need for program model adaptation, given that it is moving the model to a different context and also is widening the age range of the target group. What type of adaptations will be made? How will these adaptations impact the evaluation?

The age range of youth participants will be 14-24 year olds in both rural and urban settings.

Discussion in the original SIF proposal about 16-24 year olds is specific to the Opportunity Passport program enrollment in PE Omaha. The data represents only 16-24 yr olds for OP outcomes because no youth younger than 16 has participated in OP, however, younger youth are eligible to participate.

We do not anticipate a need for program model adaptation for the following reason: Although this grant would move the Project Everlast model into a new context--namely, a more rural environment--the model itself is inherently flexible. In other words, adaptability is built into the model. For example, the model as it has been implemented thus far in 11 counties in the Nebraska Panhandle, differs from the Omaha model mainly due to rural resources and adaptation to Department of Health and Human Services procedures. Youth in the Panhandle region have a higher rate of in home services due to lack of available foster homes and facilities to accommodate youth who would be removed from their homes. This reduces the number of actual youth reported to have experienced foster care. These youth receive or have received in-home services from DHHS to maintain a safe and stable living environment. Due to the DHHS policy in the Panhandle of having a lack of appropriate placements, we have changed the model's eligibility to adapt to the needs of the community. In the Panhandle, youth who have experienced DHHS case involvement and have a lack of stable supports and relationships, which is different from Omaha's eligibility of youth who have experienced foster care, are eligible to receive all Project Everlast supports and services. Consistency in urban and rural youth populations is the lack of stable and consistent support networks. The model is designed to help youth create both personal relationships and attach to needed ongoing services to help measure their growth in seven domains. This creates the core of the model in both locations and maintains a level of fidelity and consistency across communities.

We will use a fidelity checklist, numerous tools are available for consideration, to guide communities in maintaining fidelity to the PE model at its preliminary evidence level during the rural scaling

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process. Since we are at the preliminary evidence level, the model will be implemented in rural areas as it was in urban settings. As evidence is built over the SIF project period, fidelity measures and guidance for future scaling will be adapted to reflect the current research evidence.

In sum, because of flexibility built into the model, we recognize that the array of services offered to youth through Project Everlast may vary slightly across different communities--although the core services and corresponding desired outcomes remain constant. We also recognize that the urban context in which Project Everlast is currently implemented differs from the rural context into which we are proposing to expand. We believe the quasi-experimental evaluation discussed in this proposal is well-suited to accounting for some variation across communities, and also well-suited to accounting for additional environmental variation (e.g. urban, rural, and/or additional variation within the macro-category of rural). The specific aspect of the quasi-experimental design discussed in the proposal that addresses these possible sources of bias in the results is the use of a comparison group drawn from the same geographic community. Thus, contextual variation is largely accounted for.

2. Please describe the rationale or choice of evaluation design and any risks associated in implementing design.

The quasi-experimental design described in the proposal was chosen because our assessment largely provides a strategy for identifying well-matched comparison groups (and accounting for the contextual variation as described above). However, there are risks associated with this evaluation design that should be considered and mitigated to the extent possible, especially given the population of focus. The main risk is to the well-being of the individuals placed into the waitlist group. This risk can be illustrated with two possible and not mutually exclusive scenarios. The first scenario deals with the potentially negative emotional response of individuals when learning they have been waitlisted. They may feel hurt, angry, and/or rejected. This does not relate to the efficacy of Project Everlast per se, but absolutely relates to the well-being of the youth Project Everlast is designed to help, and steps will be taken to mitigate such risk. Additionally, since preliminary evidence does suggest the efficacy of PE, a second scenario exists in which youth in the waitlist group suffer relative negative outcomes (i.e. less positive outcomes than the intervention group) simply by virtue of receiving services on a delayed time schedule. To mitigate this risk, we would propose that, if/when sufficient evidence exists of the program's efficacy then the waitlisting protocol be dropped and waitlisted individuals be granted

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immediate entry.

3. Please provide the timeline or steps for the intended evaluation related activities.

Proposed timeline of YR1 evaluation activities based on an August 1, 2015 SIF grant start date:

1. By Oct 1, 2015, formally procure qualified independent external evaluator; finalize contract for external evaluator NLT Oct 31, 2015.
2. Nov --Dec 2015, external evaluator works with project personnel and CNCS Research and Evaluation Team and Program Officer to create the final Evaluation Plan
3. Dec 2015 -- Jan 2016, university IRB review / approval if needed
4. By Jan 1, 2016, identify SIF subrecipients and the baseline data for a. the target population in subrecipient community and b. the system infrastructure of support created / enhanced
5. By March 1, 2016, create local evaluation plans with each subrecipient, seek CNCS approval
6. By April 1, 2016, begin data collection in sub-recipient communities/administer pre-test survey with intervention and control groups; coincides with start of service provision by subrecipients. Note that the pre-test survey is part of the standard intake form across all communities.
7. By April 1, 2017, administer post-test survey with intervention and control groups
8. May-June 2017, interview key personnel, subrecipient stakeholders, compile qualitative data
8. Completed Sept 1, 2017, finalize analysis of pre-test and post-test data and key informant data
9. Completed Dec 1, 2017, finalize report writing and share findings with stakeholders
10. Ongoing, use evaluation findings to inform YR2-5 Recipient and Subrecipient decisions

4. Please address what will be measured in the QED study. Will there be specific measures for each of the seven domains? What will be measured in each domain?

Across communities, change in seven domains will be measured in the QED study. These are the core domains which preliminary evidence suggests Project Everlast has the capacity to impact and the domains which our experience suggests communities have the current baseline level of infrastructure in place to effectively impact. Specific measures will be developed for each of the core domains in consultation with the external evaluator when contracted.

5. Please clarify who conducted the Jim Casey survey and where the results can be found in order to

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verify data provided in the application? It seems that data comes from an internal evaluation activity but no details about the source of evaluation data are specified in the application.

PE youth enrolled in the Opportunity Passport ζ asset development program complete the Opportunity Passport Participant Survey (OPPS) twice annually. Young people take the OPPS from any computer with an Internet connection by logging into an online portal with a confidential, unique to the respondent, identification number provided by the OPPS online system upon registering for access. Responses inputted by youth are uploaded directly to Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) staff who clean the data and remove identifiable information (including name). JCYOI then mails data to the NC PE Director of Program Evaluation on a CD-ROM approximately 1-3 months after survey administration. The CD-ROM is handled only by the Director of Program Evaluation and kept in a secured cabinet. The CD-ROM is not physically shared with any other party, but results may be obtained via written request and approval by the PE chain of command. For data integrity validation purposes by CNCS SIF personnel, direct contact with the JCYOI OPPS national data administrator would be the appropriate connection, or you may contact our JCYOI consultant, Shannon Brower, sbbrower@gmail.com for linkage to the data.

PE youth not participating in the OP ζ program but involved in other PE services complete a nearly identical version of OPPS via SurveyMonkey. Using an Internet link, young people can take the survey with a program staff member or on their own, wherever they have a computer and Internet access. Young people do provide their name for tracking purposes, and are assured their individual responses will only be shared in aggregate form. Only the PE Director of Program Evaluation has access to this information. Results are stored on the SurveyMonkey website until someone with our account information logs in and physically deletes them, even after the survey is closed. In order to see results, viewers need to have our login information, and once in the system there are a number of ways to export the information based on results desired for viewing. CNCS SIF personnel would be provided our SurveyMonkey login information for access to PE youth data.

C. Budget Issues for Clarification

Please answer the following questions in your clarifications narrative or make the changes requested below directly in the application budget narrative section in eGrants.

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1. In the clarifications narrative section, please describe in further detail your plan for securing the intermediary match and any existing match commitments.

The one million per year private match from the Sherwood Foundation and benefactors William and Ruth Scott identified in our proposal will be available annually upon written request by Nebraska Children to the investors authorized representatives. NC has an outstanding relationship with these two philanthropists that has existed since inception of the Project Everlast model and the planning process that instigated PE which was the original Omaha Independent Living Plan completed in 2006. Upon notice of funding award and a fully executed cooperative agreement with CNCS SIF, we will notify the authorized representatives and can expect to receive the year one full match amount within a four to six week period.

In subsequent SIF project periods, years two -- five, the same match investment request process will be followed with the investors, accompanied or preceded by a complete program progress and financial expenditure report for the prior year's work.

The Letters of Commitment for this match were included in the original SIF proposal and identify agreed upon terms and conditions that we must meet as the intermediary organization for annual receipt of the one million dollar cash match from the Sherwood Foundation and William and Ruth Scott.

2. In the clarifications narrative section, please describe in further detail how you plan to help grantees make their match.

Selecting highly qualified subrecipients in rural, philanthropically underserved areas of Nebraska presents a local fund development challenge we are prepared to address with these strategies:

a. As the intermediary providing capacity building support to local subrecipients, we have budgeted for a Rural Resource Specialist position, paid 100% by private match, to help rural areas build the skills and capacities needed to raise private charitable and corporate dollars to support the proposed work as one tactic to raise cash match equivalent to their SIF subrecipient award amount. The Rural Resource Specialist will provide subrecipients with fundraising training at an executive quality level as the

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position to be hired will be required to hold a Certified Fundraising Executive qualification. The Specialist will help communities, both one-on-one and in peer group trainings, identify prospective funders, build strategic relationships with prospects, make appropriate professional asks of private donors, family foundations and corporations, develop staff capacity in grantwriting, steward all donors ongoing, and use software and tracking tools to build and maintain a quality donor database. We recognize many prospective private funders may be small in rural areas, however, these capacity building strategies will be beneficial in pursuit of any funding relationship at local, state, or national levels.

b. NC's connections to large private donors in our urban communities will be leveraged to expand urban-oriented giving to rural areas over the project period. NC staff will serve as a bridge between select urban donors investing in Project Everlast or other youth-serving programs and rural communities lacking such resources for PE eligible youth in their communities.

c. Capacity building will include helping subrecipients identify cost-savings in their current youth services and management structures that can be re-directed to sustainability of the PE backbone organizational infrastructure and / or used more efficiently in direct service to youth by a) adopting evidence based practices yielding a greater return on investment, b) reducing duplicative efforts across service sectors, c) cost-sharing by multiple entities, or d) can be paid for by another reliable funding source.

3. In the budget narrative, Section H. Other Costs, please add in sub grantee match. The intermediary has a 1:1 match and the sub-grantees have a 1:1 match.

Completed in both the budget narrative clarifications edit and the Budget Section Form.

Continuation Changes

n/a