

PR Award #: S422B2100013

Organization Name: Street Law Inc:

Address: 1010 Wayne Street, Suite 870, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Program Contact: Jen Wheeler

Phone: 2408211311

Email: JWheeler@Streetlaw.org

Absolute Priority: Innovative Instruction or Professional Development in American History, Civics and Government, and Geography

Competitive Preference Priority: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

Invitational Priority: IP 1: Projects That Incorporate Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, and Linguistically Diverse Perspectives into Teaching and Learning; and IP 2: Promoting Information Literacy Skills

Requested Total Award Amount: \$1,109,471

Project Description: This project will yield innovative instruction and professional development for educators in American history, civics and government, and geography for Maryland school districts. Talking About Local Current and Contested Issues in Schools (TALCCS) will impact more than 36,000 students by providing high-quality professional development to 452 teachers in all 24 Maryland school districts over its three-year life. The goal of this project is to ensure an increased frequency in discussions and deliberations around contested and current issues in Maryland classrooms and communities, with particular focus on serving diverse and under-resourced areas.

Project Expected Outcomes: To achieve the project goals, Street Law and its partners will provide tailored curricula and professional development sessions for Maryland elementary, middle, and high school educators. The project will gradually grow in scale over three years—first reaching a small group of teachers and school administrators in Baltimore, Frederick, Wicomico, and Calvert Counties, who will then go on to become “teacher-leaders” and help Street Law facilitate sessions across their four school districts, and then across all 24 Maryland school districts. Eventually, each Maryland district will host discussions of current and contested issues for the wider community as well, including adults. TALCCS will build the capacity of school districts and the state education agency to support ongoing implementation beyond the life of the project.

Project Special Features: TALCCS is exemplary for its innovative approach; scalable, sustainable design; research-backed pedagogy, content, and professional development; student- and educator-centered focus; systematic approach to supporting underserved communities; and its implementers’ proven expertise in the field. The project fills a major need in education practice: teachers and school district leaders want to be able to facilitate these discussions, which have shown evidence of success in pedagogical research, but have not received adequate training or resources to do so. Developing students’ ability to skillfully discuss contested public issues, and creating opportunities for them to practice this skill, is an essential part of bridging the divides in American society. More broadly, this project also closes the “civic achievement gap” by reaching underserved students in areas where standardized civics assessment scores are low. This project’s measurable outcomes include:

- 1) Teachers increase the frequency and quality of current and contested issues discussions and deliberations in their classrooms.
- 2) Students improve literacy skills.
- 3) Students improve knowledge in U.S. history, civics/government, and geography.
- 4) Students improve social studies skills, including understanding multiple perspectives, developing claims using text-based evidence, and more.
- 5) Students improve civic attitudes, including belief that their voices and opinions matter, interest in current events and following the news, intending to vote, and more.

Project Partners: Street Law, Inc., in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore County Public Schools and the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative.