

Nation's Boldest Education Reform Plans to Receive Federal Innovation Grants Once Private Match Is Secured

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Contact: Public Affairs, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov

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A cross-section of 49 school districts, nonprofit education organizations and institutions of higher education have been selected from among nearly 1,700 applicants for potential funding under the Investing in Innovation (i3) program. To receive a share of the \$650 million in i3 grants, the winning applicants must secure a commitment for a 20 percent private sector match by Sept. 8.

"All across America, innovative entrepreneurs are finding solutions to our most pressing educational challenges," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "i3 will support creative thinkers who test good ideas and take proven approaches to scale so that more children can benefit."

The Education Department selected these 49 proposals based on recommendations from independent peer review panels. Grants fall into three categories: up to \$50 million per "scale-up" grant for programs with a strong track record of success; up to \$30 million per "validation" grant for growing programs with emerging evidence of success; and up to \$5 million per "development" grant for promising ideas. Winning applicants will serve 42 states and 2 territories with more than half intending to serve students with disabilities and limited English proficient students and 37 percent intending to serve rural school districts.

According to Jim Shelton, assistant deputy secretary for innovation and improvement, "We were really struck by the number of high quality applicants and winners who were not among the usual suspects."

The i3 fund, which is part of the historic \$10 billion investment in school reform in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), will support local efforts to start or expand research-based innovative programs that help close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for high-need students. The competition was open to school districts as well as nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education working in partnership with public schools. Applicants were required to demonstrate their previous success in closing achievement gaps, improving student progress toward proficiency, increasing graduation rates, or recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and principals.

Today's selected applicants must secure a commitment for the required 20 percent private-sector match by Sept. 8, 2010. These applicants can take advantage of tools such as the Open Innovation Portal (innovation.ed.gov) and the Foundation Registry i3 (foundationregistryi3.org) to connect with a wide variety of potential funders.

A detailed list of the 2010 Highest-Rated i3 Applicants, along with a summary of the characteristics of the 2010 Highest-Rated Applicants, and FAQs related to today's announcement can be found here: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>. Later today, the department will also post reviewers' comments and scores for all of the 2010 highest-rated i3 applicants, as well as application narratives for the highest-rated scale-up applicants on this site.

In order to continue to support innovation and evidence based practices, a summit will be held in November, 2010 for other promising applicants that were not among the applicants selected today. The department plans to highlight these high quality programs at a forum at which potential funding partners may support efforts that the department is unable to directly support at this time. This list of promising applicants and the details of the event will be announced in the coming weeks.

The administration has requested an additional \$500 million in funding for this program in FY 2011. Additional rounds of funding may offer applicants that were not selected and other potential grantees additional time to strengthen their models and build their evidence bases, supporting a continued cycle of innovation and evaluation.

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