

Federal Funding Alert

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Investing in Innovation (I-3) Grant Announcement Released

Link to RFA: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/applicant.html>

Important Deadlines:

Letter of Intent – April 1, 2010

Application due – May 11, 2010

Intergovernmental review – July 12, 2010

The Department of Education recently announced its request for applications for the FY2010 Investing in Innovation (I-3) grant program. This new program will provide \$650 million for 3-5 year grants to local educational agencies (LEAs), public school districts, and nonprofit organizations working in collaboration with school districts or a consortium of schools which have demonstrated improvements in student achievement and closing achievement gaps; decreasing dropout rates; increasing high school graduation rates; and increasing college enrollment and completion rates. Funds will be awarded based on a tiered system, placing priority on those programs with the strongest evidence; and promising programs that are willing to undergo rigorous evaluation.

One of the consistent results from at least two of the randomized controlled trials is that Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) leads to an improvement in early school readiness and academic achievement for the child. In addition, NFP's goal of improving economic self-sufficiency includes working with clients to identify and achieve their short and long-term educational goals. As a proven outcome for the child, and as a possible outcome for the mother, NFP has the potential to impact on student achievement and closing achievement gaps that may be an attractive component to include in an application for I-3 funds. NFP's quality support and evaluation systems, and our strong evidence base overall including growing educational outcomes data could help strengthen the justification for an I-3 application. Because of the short time frame for this round of applications, competitive NFP applicants will have already cultivated or established partnerships with LEAs and/or educational resource agencies within the community. Because individual NFP implementing agencies may have limited data on educational outcomes, we do not recommend that an applicant pursue an I-3 grant with NFP as the sole beneficiary, but rather as part of a continuum of proven services which are dedicated to helping students graduate and go to college.

Applicants may apply for one of three categories/tiers of I-3 grants: Scale-up, Validation, and Development grants, whose funding levels and award amounts are based on the evidentiary requirements of each category. Eligible activities to be funded under this grant include:

- Expansion and development of innovative best practices that can serve as models of best practices
- Build partnerships with the private sector and/or philanthropic community
- Identify and document best practices that can be shared and taken to scale based on demonstrated success.

Scale-Up grantees will receive the largest grants and have the strongest level of evidence that the proposed project/program will have a statistically significant effect on the targeted educational improvements. "Strong Evidence" is defined as studies whose designs can support causal conclusions and

have high external validity. Examples of this type of evidence include: more than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study; or one large, well-designed and well-implemented randomized control trial that supports the effectiveness of the project/program.

Validation grantees must provide moderate evidence that the proposed project/program will have statistically significant effects on the targeted educational improvements. “Moderate Evidence” is defined as studies whose designs can support casual conclusions but have limited generalizability. Examples of moderate evidence include: at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study supporting the effectiveness of the program with small sample sizes or other implementation conditions that limit generalizability; or at least one well-designed and well-implemented (experimental or quasi-experimental study that does not demonstrate equivalence between the intervention and comparison groups at program entry but that has no other major flaws related to internal validity; or correlational research with strong statistical controls for selection bias and for discerning the influence of internal factors.

Development grantees will support promising programs or untested practices which are willing to undergo rigorous evaluation. Competitive applicants within this category must provide evidence that the project/program has yielded promising results that suggest additional research and/or evaluation is warranted. These proposed projects/programs must provide rationale for the strategy or practice based on research findings or reasonable hypotheses, such as education theories.

Each I-3 grantee (no matter what category) must estimate the number of students to be served by the project/program; and has the capacity to reach the proposed number of students. Development grantees must provide evidence that they have the ability to implement and appropriately evaluate the project/program. The application acknowledges that LEAs do not typically responsible for bringing these types of projects, practices, etc. to scale; and encourages applicants to partner with the private sector and/or agencies that can help bring the project/program to scale.

Applicants for all types of I-3 grants must identify one of four “absolute priorities” and address that priority in their applications. The four absolute priorities include:

- Innovations that support effective teachers and principles
- Innovations that improve the use of data
- Innovations that complement the implementation of high standards and high quality assessments
- Innovations that turn around persistently low-performing schools

Competitive applicants will have strong existing partnerships with LEAs and community stakeholders; experience and success working with high need populations; and a strong track record with improving early learning outcomes, working with rural LEAs, assisting students with disabilities, and supporting college access/success.

We encourage existing and potential implementing agencies to analyze and consider if the I-3 grant program would be a good fit for your agency while maintaining fidelity to the NFP model. If you have any questions regarding this funding alert, please contact your Program Developer and/or Sarah McGee of the Policy & Government Affairs Department at 303.865.8384 or sarah.mcgee@nursefamilypartnership.org.