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RELEASE**

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**DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES PRE-APPLICATION FOR 2012 INVESTING IN  
INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT APPLICANTS**

*Changes to third round of i3 competition simplify application process and add priority  
for Parent and Family Engagement*

The U.S. Department of Education announced the third year of the Investing in Innovation (i3) grant competition for local educational agencies, groups of schools and non-profit organizations to improve student results through innovative practices. This competition invites entities interested in grants of up to \$3 million - termed “Development” grants under the i3 competition — to submit a simplified pre-application starting today through April 9.

“We have made efforts to improve the i3 competition each year, and simplifying the application process is part of ongoing efforts to make the Department’s programs work better for potential grantees and have greater impact for students,” said Jim Shelton, assistant deputy secretary for the Office of Innovation and Improvement.

In its first two years, i3 generated unprecedented interest, receiving nearly 2,300 applications from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The vast majority of applications sought funds under i3’s Development grant category, which supports new projects or programs with high potential for success but which have been implemented previously in only limited contexts.

The new pre-application process shortens the application narrative and reduces other supporting documents that i3 has previously requested as part of full applications. The organizations that submit the highest-rated pre-applications will be invited to submit a longer application. Such applicants will be given additional time to complete their full application.

The Department has also included a new absolute priority within the 2012 i3 Development competition focused on improving parent and family engagement.

“Parent and family engagement is a critical component of student success, but there are too few models with evidence of effectiveness. By using i3 to shine a spotlight on this need and on promising approaches, we hope to identify new solutions of national importance,” Shelton said.

In addition, the Department has modified its approach to supporting effective teachers and principals: the Department’s new grant requirements enable applicants to develop projects that focus on a single stage in the teacher or principal recruitment, training, and retention process. The i3 competition continues to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education; turning around low-performing schools; and improving graduation rates in rural schools. The Department also intends to include a priority for standards and assessments in the other i3 grant competitions (the “Validation” and “Scale-up” grants described below).

Local educational agencies (LEAs) and nonprofits in partnership with LEAs or a consortium of schools are invited to apply to the i3 program. All projects must address one of the absolute priorities to be eligible. In addition, competitive preference will be given to grantees submitting a full application that focuses on improving early learning outcomes, increasing college access and success, addressing the unique needs of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students, improving productivity, or using technology.

This year’s competition invites applications for a share of approximately \$150 million in grants in one of the program’s three grant categories:

§ *Scale-up*, which awards individual grants of up to \$25 million to projects with the strongest evidence and track records of success;

§ *Validation*, which awards individual grants of up to \$15 million to projects with moderate levels of evidence; and,

§ *Development*,

The Department will announce the applications for Scale-up and Validation grants in separate notices in the coming weeks.

Once the highest-ranked grant applicants are selected, each potential grantee is required to secure a private sector match of 5%, 10%, or 15%, respectively, in order to receive the award.

To learn more about the i3 grant program and the new pre-application process, please visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>.

Federal Register Notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-02-24/pdf/2012-4357.pdf>

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