

**North-Central P-16 Council**  
Information for Consideration

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Innovation (i3) Competition

ED.gov Blog

## Launching the FY2011 Investing in Innovation (i3) Competition

Posted on [June 3, 2011](#) by [Cameron Brenchley](#)

Today, the U.S. Department of Education launched the 2011 Investing in Innovation (i3) competition. This second round of i3 makes \$150 million available to school districts and non-profit organizations to continue support of innovative approaches that significantly improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement, engagement and attainment.

In 2010, the i3 competition received an unprecedented response. Nearly 1,700 applicants vied for \$650 million in funding, and 49 organizations received awards ranging from \$3 million to \$50 million dollars. Information about last year's applicants is available at [data.ed.gov](http://data.ed.gov).

The logo for the Investing in Innovation (i3) competition, featuring the letters 'i3' in a bold, green, sans-serif font.The text 'investing in innovation' in a green, sans-serif font, with 'investing' on the top line, 'in' on the second line, and 'innovation' on the third line.

This year's competition has changed to take into consideration feedback from the field, what Secretary Duncan has called the "new normal"—the need to do more with less—and the administration's focus on preparing our young people to win the future by improving STEM education.

The 2011 i3 competition marks an important milestone in realizing the full vision of the program—to find and fund the best ideas of educators and non-profits throughout the country in order to create a robust portfolio of innovative solutions with evidence of their effectiveness. The design of i3—three levels of grants, from \$3 million to \$25 million, based on the simple notion that promising ideas with little evidence can receive limited funding and proposals supported by a lot of evidence can receive substantial funding—reinforces the Department's conviction that evidence matters and the goal of creating a pipeline of promising solutions that grows what works.

In response to substantial feedback from prior applicants and other stakeholders, the Department has simplified the i3 competition for 2011. The simplifications include fewer selection criteria and a smaller percentage of required private sector matching funds.

The Department also has included new priorities in the i3 competition that reflect key areas of reform. STEM education, a cross-cutting Administration priority, is now an absolute priority. In recognition of the need to improve educational opportunities for rural students, improving rural achievement is also now an absolute priority. Two new competitive preference priorities, improving productivity and improved use of educational technology, reflect the "new normal" and the need for schools and districts to improve performance with flat or declining budgets.

Other key design components that remain from the 2010 competition include:

- Requirement to implement practices, strategies, or programs for high-need students;
- Emphasis on sustainability and scalability; and

- Rigorous independent evaluations of all grant projects.

To support potential applicants, the Department will be hosting three pre-application workshops and webinars. The Development, Validation, and Scale-up application packages, including the competition notices and supporting materials, and information on the pre-application workshops, can be found on the [i3 webpage](#). Applications for the 2011 i3 competition are due on August 2, 2011, and awards will be made no later than December 31, 2011.

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## Eligibility

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**Who May Apply:** (by category) Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and Nonprofit organizations

**Who May Apply:** (specifically) Local Educational Agencies and a partnership between a nonprofit organization and (1) one or more LEAs or (2) a consortium of schools

To be eligible for an award, an eligible applicant must—except as specifically set forth in the Note about Eligibility for an Eligible Applicant that Includes a Nonprofit Organization that follows:

1. (A) Have significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA (economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities); or  
(B) Have demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement for all groups of students described in that section;
2. Have made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data;
3. Demonstrate that it has established one or more partnerships with the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, and that the private sector will provide matching funds in order to help bring results to scale; and
4. In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, provide in the application the names of the LEAs with which the nonprofit organization will partner, or the names of the schools in the consortium with which it will partner. If an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization intends to partner with additional LEAs or schools that are not named in the application, it must describe in the application the demographic and other characteristics of these LEAs and schools and the process it will use to select them as either official or other partners. An applicant must identify its specific partners before a grant award will be made.

Note about LEA Eligibility:

For purposes of this program, an LEA is an LEA located within one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Note about Eligibility for an Eligible Applicant that Includes a Nonprofit Organization:

The authorizing statute (as amended) specifies that an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization is considered to have met the requirements in paragraphs (1) and (2) of the eligibility requirements for this program if the nonprofit organization has a record of significantly improving student achievement, attainment, or retention. For an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization must demonstrate that it has a record of significantly improving student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools. Therefore, an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization does not necessarily need to include as a partner for its Investing in Innovation Fund grant an LEA or a consortium of schools that meets the requirements in paragraphs (1) and (2).

In addition, the authorizing statute (as amended) specifies that an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization is considered to have met the requirements of paragraph (3) of the eligibility requirements for this program if the eligible applicant demonstrates that it will meet the requirement relating to private-sector matching.

**Evidence Standards:** To be eligible for an award, an application for a Scale-up grant must be supported by strong evidence, an application for a Validation grant must be supported by moderate evidence, and an application for a Development grant must be supported by a reasonable hypothesis.

**Funding Categories:** An applicant must state in its application whether it is applying for a Scale-up, Validation, or Development grant. An applicant will be considered for an award only for the type of grant for which it applies.

**Cost Sharing or Matching:** To be eligible for an award, an eligible applicant must demonstrate that it has established one or more partnerships with an entity or organization in the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, and that the entity or organization in the private sector will provide matching funds in order to help bring project results to scale. An eligible applicant must obtain matching funds or in-kind donations equal to an amount that the Secretary will specify in the notice inviting applications for the specific i3 competition.

**Subgrants:** In the case of an eligible applicant that is a partnership between a nonprofit organization and (1) one or more LEAs or (2) a consortium of schools, the partner serving as the applicant may make subgrants to one or more official partners.


**Limits on Grant Awards:** (a) No grantee may receive more than two new grant awards of any type under the i3 program in a single year; (b) In any two-year period, no grantee may receive more than one new Scale-up or Validation grant; and (c) No grantee may receive more than \$55 million in new grant awards under the i3 program in a single year.

**Evaluation:** A grantee must comply with the requirements of any evaluation of the program conducted by the Department. In addition, the grantee is required to conduct an independent evaluation of its project and must agree, along with its independent evaluator, to cooperate with any technical assistance provided by the Department or its contractor.

Grantees must make broadly available through formal (e.g., peer-reviewed journals) or informal (e.g., newsletters) mechanisms, and in print or electronically, the results of any evaluations it conducts of its funded activities. For Scale-up and Validation grants, the grantee must also ensure the data from their evaluations are made available to third-party researchers consistent with applicable privacy requirements.

**Participation in "Communities of Practice":** Grantees are required to participate in, organize, or facilitate, as appropriate, communities of practice for the Investing in Innovation Fund.

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## 2011 i3 At-A-Glance

Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education  
June 2011

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In 2010, the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) generated unprecedented enthusiasm as nearly 1,700 applicants proposed projects to improve student achievement and attainment. The Department of Education is pleased that Congress has appropriated nearly \$150 million in additional funding to ensure that we continue to explore a range of new and evidence-based, innovative approaches to improving student achievement and ensuring that every student has access to a world-class education.

In response to feedback from previous applicants and other i3 stakeholders, the Department made changes to simplify the i3 competition. The key changes are identified, and more detail on the entire competition is included below, but prospective applicants should review the competition documents for the grant category in which they plan to compete to ensure complete understanding of the competition and the requirements for applicants.

**Key Changes:** As a summary, the key changes include:

- **Funding Levels.** The maximum awards for each i3 grant type for the 2011 i3 competition are:
  - Scale-up: Up to \$25 million
  - Validation: Up to \$15 million
  - Development: Up to \$3 million
- **Absolute Priorities (APs).** The 2011 competition now includes a total of five APs as noted below:
  - Retaining: Teachers and Principals; Standards and Assessments; Low-Performing Schools
  - Adding: Promoting STEM Education; Improving Rural Achievement
- **Competitive Preference Priorities (CPPs).** Applicants may identify no more than two CPPs for the purpose of earning competitive preference points. Applicants may address as many of the competitive preference priorities as needed for the purpose of providing a comprehensive description of their proposed projects. However, the Department will only review and award points for the maximum of two CPPs the applicant identifies. The 2011 competition now includes five CPPs as noted below:
  - Retaining: Early Learning; College Access and Success; Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficiency
  - Adding: Productivity; Technology
- **Selection Criteria.** The number of selection criteria is reduced to 4. Specifically, selection criteria that were addressed elsewhere in the 2010 i3 competition – Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect and Experience of the Eligible Applicant – are not selection criteria in 2011 (but remain eligibility requirements and should be addressed by applicants as such). The points by criterion vary across competitions, as noted below:

Selection Criteria	Development	Validation	Scale-up
<b>A. Need for the Project</b>	35	25	30
<b>B. Quality of the Project Design</b>	25	25	30
<b>C. Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>	20	25	20
<b>D. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel</b>	20	25	20
<b>Total Points</b>	100	100	100

- **Matching Requirements.** The percentage amount of required private-sector match now differs by competition. Applicants may still request a reduced matching amount:
  - Scale-up: 5% of the requested grant award
  - Validation: 10% of the requested grant award
  - Development: 15% of the requested grant award



- **Limits on Grant Awards.** The limits on grant awards are revised such that no grantee may receive more than one new Scale-up or Validation grant in any two-year period. This is in addition to the limits of no more than two new grant awards and no more than \$55MM in funding in a single year. However, this does not affect current Validation or Scale-up grantees' ability to receive new Development grants or to participate in other applications as partners.

**Summary of FY2011 Competition Design**

- **Funding:** \$148.2 million (est.) in funding for 2011
- **Purpose.** The purpose of this program is to provide competitive grants to applicants with a record of improving student achievement, attainment, or retention in order to expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative practices that are demonstrated to have an impact on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.
- **Eligibility Requirements.** The following entities may apply to the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) for grants: (1) local educational agencies (LEAs), and (2) nonprofit organizations in partnership with (a) one or more LEAs or (b) a consortium of schools. In order to be eligible to receive an i3 grant, applicants must address key requirements:
  - Student Focus – implement practices, strategies, or programs for high-need students
  - Historical Success – an LEA applying on its own must demonstrate that it: (a) closed achievement gaps or improved achievement for all groups of students, and (b) achieved significant improvement in other areas; partnerships involving a non-profit organization must demonstrate that the non-profit organization has a record of significantly improving student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools
  - Absolute Priorities – address one of the five APs
  - Matching Requirement – secure matching funds from the private sector equal to 5% of the award they are seeking for Scale-up grants, 10% for Validation grants, and 15% for Development grants; or request a reduced matching level
  - Evidence – meet the evidence requirement of the type of grant for which they have applied
- **Evaluation Requirements.** Grantees under the i3 program must conduct an independent program evaluation, cooperate with technical assistance and share broadly the results of any evaluations (and share data sets with third-party researchers for Validation and Scale-up) of i3 funded efforts.
- **Three Grant Types.** There are three types of grants within the i3 program – Development, Validation and Scale-up grants. Applicants must select which type of grant they are seeking. Following is a table that summarizes the differences amongst the three types of grants within the i3 program:

**Table 1: Grant Types Available Within the i3 Program**

	<b>Development</b>	<b>Validation</b>	<b>Scale-up</b>
<b>Estimated Funding Available Per Grant</b>	Up to \$3MM	Up to \$15MM	Up to \$25MM
<b>Estimated Number of Grants</b>	Up to 15	Up to 5	Up to 2
<b>Evidence Required</b>	Reasonable hypothesis	Moderate evidence	Strong evidence
<b>Scaling Required</b>	Able to further develop and scale	Able to be scaled to the regional or state level	Able to be scaled to the national, regional or state level

- **Absolute Priorities (APs).** Applicants for all types of grants must select one of the five APs against which their applications will be reviewed:
  - Absolute Priority 1: Innovations that Support Effective Teachers and Principals
  - Absolute Priority 2: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education
  - Absolute Priority 3: Innovations that Complement the Implementation of High Standards and High-Quality Assessments
  - Absolute Priority 4: Innovations that Turn Around Persistently Low-Performing Schools
  - Absolute Priority 5: Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates (Rural Local Educational Agencies)
- **Competitive Preference Priorities (CPPs).** Applicants for all types of grants may also identify a maximum of two CPPs for the purposes of receiving competitive preference points. For all CPPs, points will be awarded as “all or nothing” (i.e., one point or zero points):
  - Competitive Preference Priority 6: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
  - Competitive Preference Priority 7: Innovations that Support College Access and Success
  - Competitive Preference Priority 8: Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
  - Competitive Preference Priority 9: Improving Productivity
  - Competitive Preference Priority 10: Technology
- **Selection Criteria.** Peer reviewers will use the same selection criteria across all grant types, but the criteria have different factors in each competition and peer reviewers will weight criteria differently in each competition. The following table lists the selection criteria and summarizes the points per selection criteria by grant type:

**Table 2: Summary of Selection Criteria Points by i3 Grant Competition**

Selection Criteria	Development	Validation	Scale-up
<b>A. Need for the Project</b>	35	25	30
<b>B. Quality of the Project Design</b>	25	25	30
<b>C. Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>	20	25	20
<b>D. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel</b>	20	25	20
<b>Total Points</b>	100	100	100

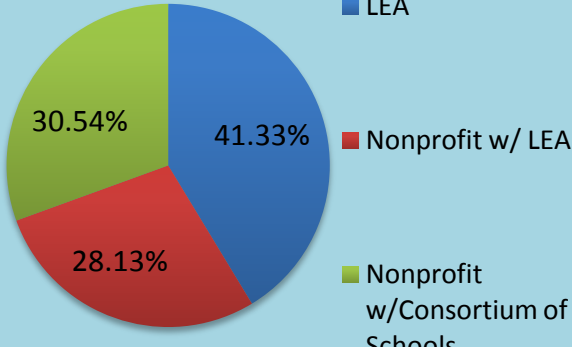
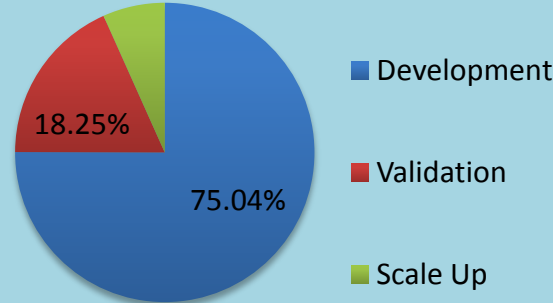
The factors for each selection criterion are included in the Notices Inviting Applications.

- **Timing.** The final Notices Inviting Applications were published in the *Federal Register* on June 3, 2011. The Department requests that prospective applicants submit an optional intent to apply by June 23, 2011. All applications are due on August 2, 2011. The Department plans to host several pre-application workshops in Washington, DC, San Francisco, and Houston in the coming weeks, as well as webinars on key i3 topics. Applications will be reviewed in late Summer/early Fall 2011, and grant awards will be announced in December 2011.
- **Additional details may be found on the i3 website:** <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>
- **Additional inquiries should be submitted to [i3@ed.gov](mailto:i3@ed.gov).**



# Notes on Intent to Apply Summary Document

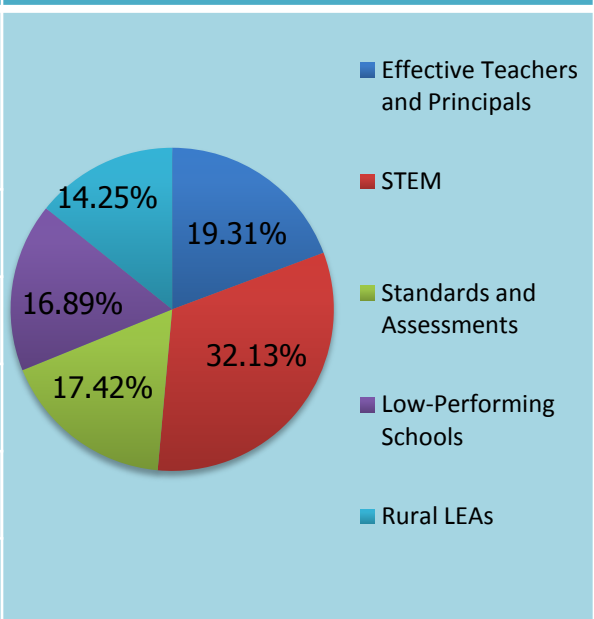
1. Organizations were not required to submit an intent to apply, nor are they required to apply once they have submitted an intent, so this may not be a wholly accurate predictor of the number of applications we will actually receive or of the sources of applications.
2. Potential applicants submitted multiple intents to apply, in some cases indicating different priorities or grants types, in some cases not. Therefore, the summary information is an estimate used for planning purposes only and we have only released the names and locations of potential applicants to facilitate identification and potential connections.
3. Only one organization name is listed for each intent received. Therefore, this list does not indicate all organizations that may be partners or who may have been included in the intents submitted.
4. Charts reflect information that was reported to us and have not otherwise been vetted by the agency for accuracy.
5. We collect this information with the goal of informing our internal planning (i.e., Have we lined up enough peer reviewers? Are there consistent patterns we should address through targeted guidance or FAQs?) and find it helpful for that purpose.

Question	Summary Data			Graphic												
<b>Eligible Applicant Type</b>	<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<p data-bbox="1437 229 1812 268"><b>Eligible Applicant Type:</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="1340 372 1914 715"> <caption>Eligible Applicant Type Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Applicant Type</th> <th>Response Percent</th> <th>Response Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LEA</td> <td>41.33%</td> <td>548</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nonprofit w/ LEA</td> <td>28.13%</td> <td>373</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nonprofit w/ Consortium of Schools</td> <td>30.54%</td> <td>405</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Applicant Type	Response Percent	Response Count	LEA	41.33%	548	Nonprofit w/ LEA	28.13%	373	Nonprofit w/ Consortium of Schools	30.54%	405
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<b>Type of Grant Requested</b>	<b>Development</b>	75.04%	995	<p data-bbox="1425 901 1823 939"><b>Type of grant requested:</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="1340 996 1895 1296"> <caption>Type of grant requested Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Grant Type</th> <th>Response Percent</th> <th>Response Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Development</td> <td>75.04%</td> <td>995</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Validation</td> <td>18.25%</td> <td>242</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scale Up</td> <td>6.71%</td> <td>89</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Grant Type	Response Percent	Response Count	Development	75.04%	995	Validation	18.25%	242	Scale Up	6.71%	89
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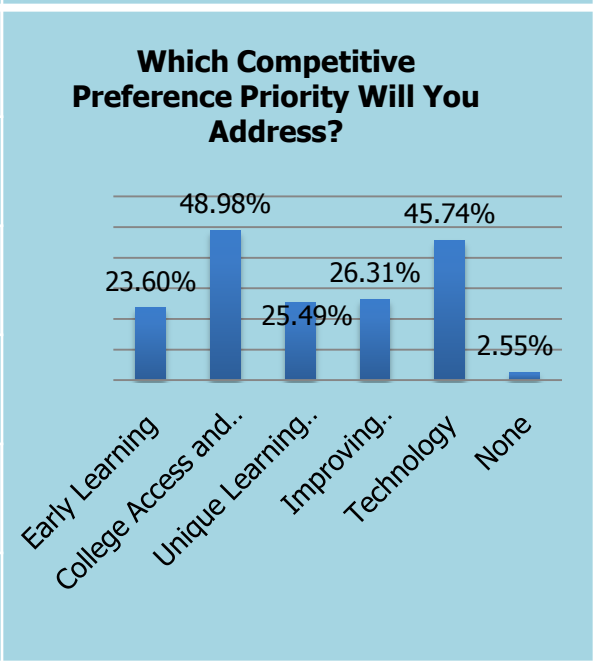
**Which Absolute Priority Will You Address?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Effective Teachers and Principals	19.31%	256
STEM	32.13%	426
Standards and Assessments	17.42%	231
Low-Performing Schools	16.89%	224
Rural LEAs	14.25%	189



**Which Competitive Preference Priorities Will You Address?**

Early Learning	23.60%	313
College Access and Success	48.98%	651
Unique Learning Needs	25.49%	338
Improving Productivity	26.31%	349
Technology	45.74%	608
None	2.55%	34



# i3 Intents to Apply by State and Grant Type

Summary of i3 Intents to Apply				
Type of grant requested				
State :	Development	Validation	Scale-up	Grand Total
AK	9	1		10
AL	9	6		15
AR	11	2	2	15
AZ	14	4	1	19
CA	128	24	9	161
CO	18	4		22
CT	16	5	1	22
DC	29	4		33
FL	45	8	5	58
GA	27	4	2	33
HI	8	5		13
IA	8	3	2	13
ID	3			3
IL	57	14	4	75
IN	10	1	3	14
KS	6			6
KY	14	4		18
LA	8		1	9
MA	22	8	1	31
MD	15	2	1	18
ME	18	2	1	21
MI	38	10	3	51
MN	17	7	1	25
MO	13	5	4	22
MS	15	1		16
MT	6		1	7

Summary of i3 Intents to Apply				
Type of grant requested				
State :	Development	Validation	Scale-up	Grand Total
NC	28	10	5	43
ND	1	1		2
NE	10	2		12
NH	6	1		7
NJ	20	5	2	27
NM	9	6		15
NV	5	1		6
NY	68	25	4	97
OH	35	3	7	45
OK	13	4	1	18
OR	13	6		19
PA	37	5	3	45
PR	2		1	3
RI	3	1		4
SC	13	3	1	17
SD	7	1	1	9
TN	9	4	1	14
TX	71	15	8	94
UT	8	3		11
VA	26	11	9	46
VT	3	1		4
WA	25	4	1	30
WI	11	4	1	16
WV	6	1	2	9
WY	2	1		3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1326</b>