Race To The Top

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:
$4.35 billion

Grantees:
States

Type of Grant:
Competitive

For more information visit
www.ed.gov

Purpose:

The $4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund is the largest ever federal competitive investment in school reform. It will reward states for past accomplishments and create incentives for future improvements. The funding criteria that the Department proposes to use will challenge states to create comprehensive strategies for addressing the four central areas of reform that will drive school improvement:

- Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and
- Turning around our lowest-performing schools.

Proposed Program Requirements:

States are the entities eligible to compete in the Race to the Top competition. They will submit applications individually, not as part of a consortium, though collaboration among states will be rewarded. States' plans for reform must be comprehensive and coherent, integrating and addressing all four reform areas. And, in order to be eligible to apply, states must have:

- Approved applications for funding under both Phase 1 and 2 of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund program; and
- No statutory or regulatory barriers to linking data about student growth and achievement to teachers for the purposes of teacher and principal evaluation.

Timing of Applications and Awards:

The Department plans to make $4B in Race to the Top grants in two phases. We anticipate that Phase 1 will open for applications late in 2009, and that awards will be made in early 2010. We intend that Phase 2 will open in late Spring of 2010, and that awards will be made by September 2010. States that apply in Phase 1 but are not awarded grants may reapply in Phase 2, together with States that are applying for the first time in Phase 2. Phase 1 grantees may not apply for additional funding in Phase 2; they will receive full-sized awards in Phase 1. Specific deadlines will be announced in subsequent notices inviting applications. Later this year, the Department intends to announce a second competition of up to $350 million for the improvement of State standards and assessments.

The Department has published a Notice of Proposed Priorities, Requirements, Definitions, and Selection Criteria in the Federal Register, and will invite public comments. The Notice will also be available at www.ed.gov.