



## TRIVIUM CONSULTING: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY BRIEF



### Department of Education

#### INVESTING in INNOVATION FUND (i3) 2015 VALIDATION GRANTS

<https://federalregister.gov/><https://federalregister.gov/a/2015-13672> (CFDA) Number: 84.411B

#### SUBMISSION DEADLINES

*Applications Available:* **June 8, 2015.**

*Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply:* **June 25, 2015.**

*Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* **August 4, 2015.**

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* **October 5, 2015.**

#### i3 GRANT FUNDING and PROJECT PERIOD

*Scale-up* grants: Up to \$20,000,000 with an estimated average size of an award being \$19,000,000. The estimated number of *Scale-up* awards anticipated is 0 to 1 awards.

*Validation* grants: Up to \$12,000,000 with an estimated average size of an award being \$11,500,000. The estimated number of *Validation* awards anticipated is 2-4 awards.

*Development* grants: Up to \$3,000,000 with an estimated average size of an award being \$3,000,000. The estimated number of *Development* awards anticipated is 9-11 awards.

*Project Period:* 36-60 months

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Entities eligible to apply for i3 grants include either of the following:

- (a) An LEA. 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.
- (b) A partnership between a nonprofit organization and —
  - (1) one or more LEAs; or
  - (2) a consortium of schools.

All grantees must:

- (1) Implement practices that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students as well as establishing partnerships between the private sector to provide matching funds; and
- (2) Implement practices that serve students who are in grades K-12 at some point during the funding period; and
- (3) Demonstrate that it has established one or more partnerships with the private sector, and that organizations in the private sector will provide matching funds in order to help bring results to scale; and





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- (d) 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.

#### **MATCHING FUNDS for VALIDATION GRANTS**

To be eligible for an award, an applicant must demonstrate that one or more private-sector organizations, which may include philanthropic organizations, will provide matching funds in order to help bring project results to scale. An eligible Validation applicant must obtain matching funds, or in-kind donations, equal to at least 10 percent of its Federal grant award. The highest-rated eligible applicants must submit evidence of 50 percent of the required private sector matching funds following the peer review of applications. A Federal i3 award will not be made unless the applicant provides adequate evidence that the 50 percent of the required private-sector match has been committed or the Secretary approves the eligible applicant's request to reduce the matching-level requirement. An applicant must provide evidence of the remaining 50 percent of required private-sector match six months after the project start date.

#### **PURPOSE of the i3 PROGRAM**

The i3 program is designed to generate and validate solutions to persistent educational challenges and to support the expansion of effective solutions across the country to serve substantially larger numbers of students. The central design element of the i3 program is its multi-tier structure that links the amount of funding that an applicant may receive to the quality of the evidence supporting the efficacy of the proposed project. This structure provides incentives for applicants to build evidence of effectiveness of their proposed projects and to address the barriers to serving more students across schools, districts, and States so that applicants can compete for more sizeable grants.

As importantly, all i3 projects are required to generate additional evidence of effectiveness. All i3 grantees must use part of their budgets to conduct independent evaluations of their projects. This ensures that projects funded under the i3 program contribute significantly to improving the information available to practitioners and policymakers about which practices work, for which types of students, and in what contexts. The Department awards three types of grants under this program: *Development* grants, *Validation* grants, and *Scale-up* grants.

#### **EXPECTATIONS of VALIDATION GRANTS**

Validation grants provide funding to support expansion of projects supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness to the national or regional level. Validation grants must further assess the effectiveness of the i3-supported practice through a rigorous evaluation, with particular focus on the populations for, and the contexts in, which the practice is most effective. Each applicant should propose to use the Validation funding to build its capacity to deliver the i3-supported practice, particularly early in the funding period, to successfully reach the level of scale proposed in its application.

Additionally, the Department expects each applicant to address any specific barriers to the growth or scaling of the organization or practice (including barriers related to cost-effectiveness) in order to deliver





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the i3-supported practice at the proposed level of scale and provide strategies to address these barriers as part of its proposed scaling plan.

All Validation grantees must evaluate the effectiveness of the practice that the supported project implements and expands. The Department expects that these evaluations will be conducted in a variety of contexts and for a variety of students, will identify the core elements of the practice, and will codify the practices to support adoption or replication by the applicant and other entities.

#### EVIDENCE STANDARDS for VALIDATION GRANTS

Validation applicants must be able to show moderate evidence of effectiveness for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice included in their applications. Applicants should review the requirements section of the notice for instructions on how to demonstrate moderate evidence of effectiveness and for information on the other eligibility requirements. The evidence standards have been refined in FY 2013 and will likely include the following definitions, all of which are pegged to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards:

*Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness* — a program or practice having at least one study that: (a) meets the WWC standards *without reservations*, found at least one favorable outcome (and no unfavorable outcomes), and has a sample that overlaps with the population or settings proposed to be served through a grant; or (b) meets WWC standards *with reservations*, found at least one favorable outcome (and no unfavorable outcomes), has a sample that overlaps with the population or settings to be served, and has a large sample or multi-site sample.

#### ABSOLUTE PRIORITIES for VALIDATION GRANTS

Although the FY 2015 i3 Validation competition does not include specific priorities for supporting English learners or students with disabilities, we require all grantees to serve high-need student populations, and we encourage applicants to consider ways in which their proposed projects could serve students with disabilities or English learners.

The Department includes four absolute priorities in the FY 2015 Validation competition from which an applicant must choose one. Each absolute priority constitutes its own funding category. Under each, it identifies subparts from which applicants must select in order to meet the absolute priority.

Absolute Priority 1—Improving the Effectiveness of Teachers or Principals

Absolute Priority 2—Implementing Internationally Benchmarked College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments

Absolute Priority 3—Implementing Comprehensive High School Reform and Redesign

Absolute Priority 4— Serving Rural Communities

#### COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES for VALIDATION GRANTS

Note there are also three competitive preference priorities in the FY 2015 Validation competition for:

(1) Improving cost-effectiveness and productivity





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- (2) Enabling the broad adoption of effective practices
- (3) Novice i3 applicants - a novice i3 applicant is an applicant that has never received a grant under the i3.

**DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION POINT of CONTACT**

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