

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Overview of ARRA Innovation Fund: \$650M



Frequently Asked Questions: ARRA Innovation Fund

The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund is designed to provide states with financial resources to alleviate expected shortfalls in education revenues and to support education improvement efforts. The \$53.6 billion Stabilization Fund is a one-time appropriation from the federal government and is comprised of three funding opportunities, including the \$650 million ARRA Innovation Fund program.

What is the Innovation Fund intended to accomplish?

The U.S. Department of Education will implement a \$650 million academic achievement award program that recognizes eligible school districts and partnerships that have demonstrated sustained success in increasing student achievement. The Innovation Fund awards are intended to allow eligible applicants to expand their work and serve as models of best practice; work in partnership with the private sector and philanthropy; and identify and document best practices that can be taken to scale.

Who is eligible to receive awards under the Innovation Fund program?

To be eligible for these awards, a school district (or a district in partnership with nonprofit organizations) must demonstrate a successful track record of narrowing achievement gaps, increasing the achievement of all students, increasing graduation rates, recruiting high-quality teachers and school leaders, or other measures documented with meaningful data. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that they have established partnerships with the private sector (including philanthropic organizations) and that the private sector will be providing matching funds to take results to scale.

How are awards through the Innovation Fund accessed?

The U.S. Department of Education will announce a formal process for applying for and receiving Innovation Fund awards.

When will the Innovation Fund awards be made available?

The Innovation Fund awards will be disbursed in two phases. The first round of awards will be made in conjunction with the ARRA State Incentive Grants. Together the two programs will provide \$1.5 billion to qualifying states in December 2009. The second phase of awards will provide \$3.5 billion some time during May, June, or July 2010.

ACT's College Readiness System

Longitudinal Assessment, Instruction & School System Improvement

ACT provides a fully aligned, research-based system of solutions that help states and districts prepare every student for college and work. Our College Readiness Standards™ and College Readiness Benchmarks define college readiness based on what postsecondary educators indicate is important for students to know and based on actual student success in credit-bearing college-entry courses. The Standards and Benchmarks together represent a single academic expectation for all students, regardless of whether they go on to college or the workplace after high school.

The longitudinal assessment component of the system—EXPLORE®, PLAN®, and the ACT®—is directly tied to and aligned with the Standards and Benchmarks. These assessments allow states to monitor students' college readiness beginning in eighth grade so that necessary interventions can be made.

QualityCore®, the instructional improvement component, offers rigorous model high school courses. QualityCore course objectives focus on the course-level knowledge and skills needed for college readiness. As such, they are tied to the ACT College Readiness Standards measured by EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT.

For school systems, ACT and the National Center for Educational Achievement offer CoreWork Diagnostics—a school system improvement service designed to help K-12 educators set and attain higher standards as they work to improve college and career readiness.

