

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Overview of ARRA Title I, School Improvement Grants: \$3B



Frequently Asked Questions: School Improvement Grants

In addition to the new programs established through the ARRA, the U.S. Department of Education will be temporarily increasing funding for a wide array of existing programs, including programs authorized under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

What are the ARRA School Improvement Grants intended to accomplish?

Pursuant to Title I, Section 1003(g) of the ESEA, the School Improvement Grants will assist schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The school districts receiving funds under the School Improvement Grants commonly implement strategies that:

- provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development that is designed to build the capacity of district and school staff and is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures;
- use research-based strategies or practices to change instructional practice to address the academic achievement problems that caused the school to be identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring;
- create partnerships among the state, district, and other entities for the purpose of delivering technical assistance, professional development, and management advice;
- provide professional development to enhance the capacity of school support team members and other technical assistance providers; and
- include other strategies determined by state or local education agencies, as appropriate, for which data indicate the strategy is likely to result in improved teaching and learning.

Who is eligible to receive funding under the ARRA School Improvement Grants program?

While more information is forthcoming, the current ESEA awards grants to State Education Agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and outlying areas. The state grant recipients are required to subgrant 95% of their allocation to school districts with schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. States will likely need to submit a new application to access the ARRA grants, but formal application guidelines have not yet been released.

How are the ARRA School Improvement Grants accessed?

The U.S. Department of Education will provide information on how to access the funds later in 2009.

When will the ARRA School Improvement Grants be made available?

The \$3 billion in grant funds is expected to be available in September or October 2009.

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.

