

# American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

## Overview of ARRA State Incentive Grants: \$4.3B



### Frequently Asked Questions: ARRA State Incentive Grants

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 \$4.3 billion ARRA State Incentive Grant program.

#### What are the State Incentive Grants intended to accomplish?

Commonly referred to by the U.S. Department of Education and the media as “race to the top” funds, \$4.3 billion will be available for the Department to make competitive grant awards to states that have made significant progress toward meeting core ARRA education reforms.

#### Who is eligible to receive funding under the State Incentive Grants program?

The State Incentive Grant program will require governors and states (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) to submit an application to participate in the competitive grant program. Each state receiving a State Incentive Grant will distribute no less than 50% of the award to school districts in the form of subgrants based on their relative shares of Title I funding under Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

#### How are the State Incentive Grant funds accessed?

Each application from states must address four areas: (1) a description of the status of the state's progress in meeting the education reform and improvement goals of the ARRA State Grant programs as it relates to standards, assessments, data systems, teacher quality and distribution, and strategies for increasing student achievement; (2) an analysis of achievement and graduation rates of public school students and strategies for ensuring that students are making progress toward meeting state academic standards; (3) a description of how the state would use its grant funding to improve student academic achievement in the state, including how it will allocate the funds to give priority to high-need school districts; and (4) a plan for evaluating the state's progress in closing achievement gaps. Additional guidance will be forthcoming from the U.S. Department of Education.

#### When will the State Incentive Grant funds be made available?

The State Incentive Grants will be awarded in two phases. The first round of awards will be made in conjunction with the ARRA Innovation Fund program. 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.

