

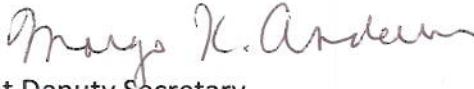
MEMORANDUM

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Date: January 28, 2010

TO: Bridget Dooling/Sharon Mar
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
U.S. Department of Education

THROUGH: Kate Mullan
Regulatory Information Management Services
U.S. Department of Education

FROM: Margo K. Anderson 
Association Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of Innovation and Improvement

SUBJECT: Emergency Clearance for a Grant Application Package for the Investing in
Innovation (i3) Discretionary Grant Program-ARRA Stimulus Grants

On February 17, 2009, the President signed into law the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009" (ARRA). ARRA established and funded a \$650 million competitive grant program, the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3). The program is designed to dramatically improve our nation's schools by encouraging and rewarding local educational agencies (LEAs), nonprofit organizations, and consortia of schools that are developing fresh ideas or growing promising programs or scaling up projects that work.

The Department is requesting that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clear the application on an emergency basis. The application will include only the Notice of Final Priorities (NFP) and the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA), as published in the Federal Register, standard forms, basic instructions including the Eligible Applicant Information Summary Sheet, and two Eligibility checklists.

There is a demonstrated need for i3 funds to provide LEAs, non-profit organizations, and school consortia to develop cutting-edge ideas that will give our students the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to excel in the future. Often in our quest to provide the schools with the basic educational needs, we sometimes neglect fostering innovative methods to reach our children and prepare them for future generations. Although this program is new, it will serve to cultivate an environment of entrepreneurship and innovation which has not always previously been associated with education reform. Therefore, it is extremely important that LEAs and

nonprofits have access to these funds as soon as possible. Receiving OMB's approval on an emergency basis is essential to awarding the i3 ARRA stimulus funds quickly.

Since the passage of ARRA, OII staff have been working diligently to develop a Notice of Final Priorities describing three types of projects that could be funded: "Scale-up" projects, "Validation" projects and "Development" projects. These three types of project differ on two key points: the level of evidence required and the capacity to scale up the project. We will need to devote a great deal of time to the review process because of the number of grants we expect under the Development projects (which require less evidence) and because of the comprehensive review of evidence and evaluation designs for the validation and scale-up applications. Without the emergency clearance it will be virtually impossible to award the funds by the statutory deadline of September 30, 2010. We hope that you will consider our request for an emergency clearance so that we are able to devote the time needed for the review process.

ED plans to award grants to applicants through a normal discretionary grant making process. The PRA section in the NFP indicated that ED expected to seek emergency approval of the information collection at the time of the publication of the NFP. Consistent with that statement, we request that OMB clear this information request on an emergency basis on the same date that OMB gives ED approval to publish the NFP. In addition, we request that OMB waive the public comment period for this ARRA-related emergency collection. If ED receives emergency approval from OMB, ED intends to make the application available by February 16th, with a deadline in mid April. All funds will be awarded prior to September 30, 2010 which will allow recipients sufficient time to plan for the use of funds.

ED is requesting OMB approval by February 16, 2010

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Tyra Stewart at (202) 260-1847 or tyra.stewart@ed.gov.