

Archived Information

Investing In Innovation Fund (i3) Frequently Asked Questions ADDENDUM #5 June 18, 2010

Please note that the following FAQs are an addendum to the FAQs published on April 30, 2010. The FAQs below have been incorporated into the relevant sections of the April 30, 2010, FAQs, and the revised document is also now posted on the i3 website at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/faq.html>.

E. MATCHING REQUIREMENT.

E-21. When will applicants be notified that they are highest rated?

The Department plans to announce the list of highest-rated applicants – for all three types of i3 grants – by the end of July 2010. Applicants determined to be highest rated will also be notified by email.

E-22. By when must highest-rated applicants secure their matches?

Applicants determined to be highest rated must provide evidence of their required match no later than September 1, 2010. All highest-rated applicants – regardless of the type of i3 grant they are seeking, the amount of funds they are requesting, or any other distinguishing factors – must adhere to this deadline.

E-23. When will highest-rated applicants who requested a reduced matching amount be notified of the Department's decision regarding their request?

Highest-rated applicants who requested a reduced matching amount will be informed of the Department's decision regarding their request at the time they are notified that they are highest rated. These applicants will be informed if the Department has approved their request for a reduced match and the percentage of the match that they are required to secure.

Please note that only applicants that are being asked to provide evidence of the required match, the highest-rated applicants, will be notified of the Department's decision on their request for a reduction in the amount of the required match.

E-24. What happens if a highest-rated applicant fails to secure its required match by the required deadline?

A highest-rated applicant that is unable to secure the required match by the required deadline will be considered ineligible for funding. The Department will not grant extensions to this deadline for highest-rated applicants.

E-25. What documentation may a highest-rated applicant submit to establish that it has secured the required match?

The NFP provides that, in order to be eligible for an i3 grant, an applicant must demonstrate that it has secured a private-sector match, in cash or in-kind contributions, that is at least 20 percent of its grant award, unless the Department has granted a request to lower that amount. The NFP does not specify what documentation an applicant must provide to establish that it has secured the required match. Examples of evidence that applicants may provide to demonstrate that funds or in-kind contributions have been committed include funding agreements with a private-sector entity or other signed documents (such as commitment letters) indicating the source, amount, purpose, and date of receipt of funds or in-kind contributions. Other signed documents (such as commitment letters) should not include contingencies that raise concerns about the funding commitment other than that the applicant must be awarded an i3 grant.

E-26. Must the entire required match be received by the time of a grant award?

As noted in E-13, although applicants must provide evidence that matching funds or in-kind contributions have been committed prior to the grant award, applicants are not required to have received the private-sector match by the time of a grant award from the Department (see E-4). An i3 grantee may arrange for the private-sector match to be provided throughout the project period of the grant. However, to meet the matching requirement, an i3 grantee must use matching funds or in-kind donations for carrying out the objectives of its i3 project during the project period.

A grantee under the i3 program that does not ultimately receive or spend the required private-sector match during its project period will be required to repay grant funds to the Department. The Department will monitor, throughout an i3 project period, the amount of private-sector funds i3 grantees are expending and the in-kind contributions they are receiving to ensure they are on track to meet the matching requirement.

E-27. May tuition discounts or scholarships count towards the private-sector match?

Tuition discounts or scholarships may count as in-kind contributions towards the private-sector match if the source of these funds is the private sector and the funds are provided consistent with the Department's regulations set forth in 34 CFR 74.23 and 80.24. In particular, any in-kind contribution, including a tuition discount or scholarship, may count toward meeting the matching requirement only if the contribution would qualify as an allowable cost that could be charged to the i3 grant [see 34 CFR 74.23(a)(3) and 80.24(b)(7)].

As stated in E-2, applicants should refer to the Department's regulations on matching funds, including in-kind contributions, which are set forth in 34 CFR 74.23 and 80.24, for clarification on requirements pertaining to in-kind donations. As also stated in E-2, only contributions from non-government, i.e., private, sources count towards the matching requirement.

E-28. May discounts on services or materials count towards the private-sector match?

Discounts on services or materials may count towards the private-sector match as in-kind contributions if the source of these contributions is the private sector and if the contributions are consistent with the Department's regulations set forth in 34 CFR 74.23 and 80.24. In particular, any in-kind contribution, including discounts on services or materials, may count toward meeting the matching requirement only

if the contribution would qualify as an allowable cost that could be charged to the i3 grant [see 34 CFR 74.23(a)(3) and 80.24(b)(7)].

As stated in E-2, applicants should refer to the Department's regulations on matching funds, including in-kind contributions, which are set forth in 34 CFR 74.23 and 80.24, for clarification on requirements pertaining to in-kind donations. As also stated in E-2, only contributions from non-government, i.e., private, sources count towards the matching requirement.

E-29. Where can i3 applicants find matching funds from the private-sector?

Applicants are encouraged to seek matching funds or in-kind donations from a diverse range of individuals, corporations, private businesses, local charitable and service organizations, and foundations (including foundations not included in the resources listed below). On May 7, 2010, the Department posted a document on its website titled "Securing the i3 Private-Sector Match: A Resource for Applicants" (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/privatesectormatch.pdf>) that cites some resources an applicant may consider when securing its required match. Specifically, this document describes four resources:

- **Foundation Registry i3** (<https://www.foundationregistryi3.org/>) - The Foundation Registry i3 was created by a group of national foundations to simplify the process for eligible applicants seeking matching foundation funds for their i3 applications and to improve the ability of the participating foundations to examine potential investment opportunities. Eligible applicants may register their i3 application on the Foundation Registry i3, which will make their proposals accessible and viewable to all participating member foundations. Please note that while the Foundation Registry i3 enables registered applicants to seek matching funds from all of the participating foundations, each foundation maintains its own decision-making authority.
- **Foundation Center** (<http://foundationcenter.org/educationexcellence/>) - The Foundation Center's Foundations for Education Excellence Initiative and internet site are resources focused on education funding. The site provides interactive maps of foundations supporting education reform by state and lists the top education grant-makers by program/reform area. Daily news feeds include announcements of new foundation grants and programs in the field.
- **Open Innovation Portal** (<https://innovation.ed.gov/>) - The Department of Education's Open Innovation Portal is an open online community that allows individuals and applicants to register ideas, collaborate on solutions, and find partners and resources. The Open Innovation Portal provides a venue for i3 applicants to meet new partners, including potential funders, and refine their ideas based on feedback from other members of the portal community.
- **Rural School & Community Trust** (<http://www.ruraledu.org/articles.php?id=2424>) - The Rural School and Community Trust (Rural Trust) provides customized technical assistance for rural school districts regarding all aspects of the i3 grant program. The Rural Trust assists rural i3 applicants in identifying potential matching funds and other promising rural innovations and building long-term capacity to complete competitive grant applications in the future.

J. TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

J-6. Where can information regarding specific i3 applications be found?

As part of the Obama Administration’s Open Government Initiative, the Department recently launched Data.ed.gov as a “one-stop shop” for education data, enabling practitioners, researchers, and the public to access data that can inform their work in classrooms and communities across the nation. The first competitive grant program featured on this website is i3. The public can now view detailed information on all i3 applicants, as well as run customized reports and summary analyses on a subset, e.g., priority addressed, State, or type of i3 grant, of i3 applicants. A link to Data.ed.gov, as well as a summary of all i3 applications received, can be found on the i3 website at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>.