

# Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant Competition (84.412A )

Technical Assistance  
for State Applicants

# Welcome

# Housekeeping...

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- During the presentation all phone lines will be placed on mute to avoid feedback during the presentation.
- Please use the “Q&A” tab to submit questions regarding RTT-ELC. We will collect and answer all unanswered questions during the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- A link to the PowerPoint slides from today’s presentation will be posted at the RTT-ELC ed.gov website at:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>
- Thank you for participating in today’s Webinar.

# Agenda

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- **Purpose, Highlights, Key Changes**
- **Competition Information**
- **Eligibility, Application, and Program Requirements**
- **Completing the Application**
  - ▣ **Priorities, Requirements, Selection Criteria**
  - ▣ **Application Format**
  - ▣ **Budget and Appendices**
  - ▣ **Performance Measures**
  - ▣ **Planning Considerations**

# RTT-ELC Competition

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The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (collectively, Departments) are holding a competition for:

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant program CFDA Number 84.41 2A

# Purpose of the RTT-ELC Program

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- To support States' efforts to build strong systems of early learning and development
- that provide increased access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs and services for the children who need it most.

# Highlights

- RTT-ELC competition is organized around five key reform areas representing the foundation of an effective early learning and development reform agenda.
  - A. Successful State Systems;
  - B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs;
  - C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children;
  - D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and
  - E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress
- The first two of these reform areas, (A) and (B) are the core focus of this program (“Core Areas”).
- Reform areas in (C), (D), and (E) are areas where applicants target activities that are relevant to their State’s context (“Focused Investment Areas”).

# Changes in the Application

2011 vs. 2013

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- Priority 4 is now a Competitive Priority
  - ▣ 2011 Application's Priority 4 was an Invitational Priority.
- The 2013 application contains a new Competitive Priority:
  - ▣ **Priority 5: Addressing the Needs of Children in Rural Areas.**
- Look for additional language on family engagement and supporting family's input in educational decision making.

# Deadlines and Submission

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- Notice of Intent to Apply deadline: **September 30, 2013**
  - ▣ We will be able to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications if we have a better understanding of the number of applications that we will receive. The notice of intent to apply is optional. Send an e-mail to [RTT-ELC.P3.Competition@ed.gov](mailto:RTT-ELC.P3.Competition@ed.gov) with “Intent to Apply” in the e-mail subject line.
- Date of Technical Assistance Planning Workshop:  
**September 10, 2013**
- Final application deadline:  
**October 16, 2013**
- Mail application to:  
U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center  
Attention: CFDA Number 84.412A, LBJ Basement Level 1  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260

# Award Information

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- Estimated Available Funds: \$280 million
- Number of New Awards Anticipated: 3-8
- Estimated Range of Awards: \$37.5 million-\$75 million
- Project Period: Up to 4 years

# Funding Categories

The Departments will not consider an application from a State that proposes a budget exceeding the applicable cap set for that State.

- Category 1—up to \$75 million—FL, NY, TX
- Category 2—up to \$52.5 million—AZ, GA, MI, PA
- Category 3—up to \$45million—AL, IN, KY, LA, MO, NJ, OK, PR, SC, TN, VA
- Category 4—up to \$37.5 million—AK, AR, CT, DC, HI, ID, IA, KS, ME, MI, MT, NE, NH, NV, ND, SD, UT, VT, WV, WY

# Three Types of Requirements

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- Eligibility Requirements
  - ▣ *Specify what applicants must have in place in order to compete for a grant.*
- Application Requirements
  - ▣ *List the elements that must be included in a complete application.*
- Program Requirements
  - ▣ *Specify what applicants must do if they win a grant.*

# Eligibility Requirements

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- (a) The State has not previously received an RTT-ELC grant.
- (b) The Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency (PSA) a memorandum of understanding or other binding agreement.
- (c) There must be an active Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program in the State.

***\*\*See application for full details on all of the Eligibility Requirements\*\****

# Application Requirements

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A few requirements to highlight:

- ▣ The State's application must be signed by the Governor or an authorized representative.
- ▣ The State must submit a certification from the State Attorney General.
- ▣ Signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement with all participating State agencies.

**\*\*See application for full details on all of the Application Requirements\*\***

# Program Requirements

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## SAC/MIECHV Requirement

- The State must have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.
- States must continue to have an active Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program for the duration of the grant, whether operated by the State or by an eligible non-profit organization.

**\*\*See application for full details on Program Requirements\*\***

# Application Process

- **Priorities**
- **Program Requirements**
- **Selection Criteria**

# Priorities

The RTT-ELC application includes absolute, competitive, and invitational priorities.

- **Absolute priority:** only applicants that meet this priority will be considered for funding.
- **Competitive preference priority:** can earn the applicant extra or “competitive preference” points; are optional and applicant may address any or all of these priorities.
- **Invitational priority:** signal areas in which the Departments are particularly interested; are optional and do not earn applicants additional points.

# Absolute Priority

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**Priority 1 (Absolute): Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.**

# Competitive Priorities

**Priority 2 (Competitive):** Including All Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

**Priority 3 (Competitive):** Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry.

# Competitive Priorities

Continued

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**Priority 4 (Competitive):** Creating Preschool through Third Grade Approaches to Sustain Improved Early Learning Outcomes through the Early Elementary Grades.

**Priority 5 (Competitive):** Addressing the Needs of Children in Rural Areas.

**\*\*This new priority was added to the 2013 Application\*\***

# Invitational Priority 6

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**Priority 6 (Invitational):** Encouraging Private-Sector Support.

# Selection Criteria

- We will use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications submitted under the RTT-ELC competition.
  - ▣ The maximum score for all the selection criteria and competitive preference priorities is 315 points.
  - ▣ The maximum score for each selection criterion is indicated in parentheses.

# Core Areas--Sections (A) and (B)

- States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas--Sections (A) (Successful State Systems) and (B) (High-Quality, Accountable Programs).

# Selection Criteria (A)

## A. Successful State Systems

- (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development. (20 points)
- (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. (20 points)
- (A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)
- (A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

# Selection Criteria B

## B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

- (B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)
  
- (B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (15 points)

# Selection Criteria B

Continued

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- (B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs. (15 points)
- (B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs. (20 points)
- (B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. (15 points)

# Focused Investment Areas

## Sections (C), (D), and (E)

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Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C) (60 Points)
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) (40 Points)
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) (40 Points)

# Selection Criteria C

## C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children.

- (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
- (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.
- (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
- (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

# Selection Criteria D

## D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

- (D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.
- (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

# Selection Criteria E

## E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

- (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.
- (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

# Completing Your Application Package

Instructions and Guidance  
on Content and Format

# Application Format

Applications should be organized in the manner described in the application, which provides instructions for all sections.

# Application Checklist

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- Formatting Recommendations
- Application Assurances and Certifications
- State Attorney General Certification
- Accountability, Transparency, Reporting, and Other Assurances and Certifications
- Eligibility Requirements
- Selection Criteria and Priorities
- Budget
- Appendix
- Application Requirements
- Application Submission Procedures

# Application

- Applicants **must** use the correct CFDA number that corresponds with the RTT-ELC competition: 84.412A.
- Application packages are available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applicant.html>.
- Applicants may type directly into the application template.
- Applications must be submitted in electronic format on a CD or DVD, with CD-ROM or DVD-ROM preferred, by mail or hand delivery.

# Application

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- We strongly recommend the applicant submit three CDs or DVDs containing the following four files:
  1. A single searchable .PDF document containing the body of the narrative and budget tables
    - (Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document is NOT searchable)
  2. A single file in a .PDF format that contains all application appendices
  3. A single file in a .PDF format that contains all of the required signature pages
  4. A single, separate file of the completed electronic budget spreadsheets

# Budget Information

- The budgets and budget narratives provide a detailed description of how States plan to use Federal RTT-ELC grant funds and funds from other sources to support projects under the State Plan.
- Use the excel tables on the RTT-ELC website.
- Organize by PSA and by project.
- The budget narratives should be of sufficient scope and detail for the Departments to determine if the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable.

# Narrative

## Lessons Learned:

- ▣ Always cross reference to important information in other sections.
- ▣ Include clear headings to help the Department staff and peer reviewers match the narrative with the selection criteria.
- ▣ We recommend that you limit your total page count for the narrative to no more than 150 pages of State-authored text.

# Appendix

- Must begin with a complete Table of Contents
- Each attachment must be described in the narrative, with a rationale for how it supports the relevant selection criterion and a cross-reference to the attachment's location in the Appendix
- Contents may include:
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Binding Agreement
  - Commitment letters, surveys, or other evidence demonstrating support
  - Organizational chart, curriculum vitae of key personnel, or other supporting information relating to management of the grant
  - Other evidence relevant to selection criteria

# Procurement Practices

Applicants that intend to use procurement transactions in implementing proposed projects should be familiar with the applicable requirements in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

- All procurement transactions be conducted in a manner “providing full and open competition” consistent with the standards in that regulation.
- Use State procurement procedures.
- Do not include information about specific contractors that may be used if the grant is awarded.

# Reporting and Accountability

Successful applicants must submit an **annual performance report** that includes a description of the State's progress to date on its goals, timelines, and budgets, as well as actual performance compared to the annual targets the State established in its application for each performance measure.

The following performance measures have been established for RTT-ELC:

# Performance Measures

## Required

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Performance Measure for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

# Performance Measures

**\*\*Only applicable if the State writes to these sections\*\***

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Performance Measure for (C)(3)(d): Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual statewide targets.

Performance Measure for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Performance Measure for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

# Planning Considerations

For your immediate consideration:

- Determine Lead Agency and all Participating State Agencies so you can start to—
  - ▣ Decide on your core application planning team,
  - ▣ Start developing MOUs, and
  - ▣ Start developing Participating State Agencies' budgets
- Determine other key groups/coalitions in the State who will be part of your core application planning team.

# Planning Considerations

Continued

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- And remember that you'll need to:
  - ▣ Obtain the required signatures before you submit your application
  - ▣ Obtain the certification from the State's Attorney General
  - ▣ Obtain the State's Governor's signature
  - ▣ Complete a detailed budget
- Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application! Late applications will not be reviewed

**Application Deadline is on or before 4:30 pm EST**

**October 16, 2013**

# Applicant Information

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<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applicant.html>

- ▣ NFP
- ▣ NIA
- ▣ Application Package
- ▣ FAQs (coming soon)
- ▣ Previous applications and comments (for reference)

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/awards-phase-1.html>

# Thank You

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Thank you for participating in the 2013 RTT-ELC Competition. Please let us know if you have any questions! You may also email us your questions at [RTT-ELC.P3.Competition@ed.gov](mailto:RTT-ELC.P3.Competition@ed.gov) or call (202)401-2871.

