Race to the Top
State Competition

Phase 2 Technical Assistance Workshop

U.S. Department of Education

April 21, 2010

Minneapolis, MN

Agenda

8:30-8:45	Welcome and Overview
8:45-10:00	Understanding the Priorities and Selection Criteria: Overview and Q&A with the Department
10:00-11:20	Presentation of Successful Applications
11:20-11:30	Break
11:30-12:45	Panel Discussion and Q&A: Building and Implementing a Statewide Strategy
12:45-1:45	Lunch on Own
1:45-3:00	Panel Discussion and Q&A: Developing Reform Plans
3:00-3:15	Break
3:15-4:00	Developing Detailed Budgets
4:00-4:45	Application Review and Submission
4:45-5:00	Final Q&A and Closing

Ground Rules

- Ask your questions as we go! States get priority…
- Webinar participants – ask your questions through "chat"
- Additional questions may be submitted to racetothetop@ed.gov
- Time keeping
- Cell phones on vibrate please
- Today's session will be transcribed and posted at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop, together with the presentation

Key Dates

Intent to Apply Due (optional)	May 4, 2010
Applications Due	June 1, 2010 by 4:30pm ET
Tier 1	June - July 2010
Tier 2 Presentations	Week of August 9, 2010
Awards Announced	Late August/Early September 2010

ED Team Introductions

- Josh Bendor, *Race to the Top Team*
- Jessica Clark, *Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*
- Meredith Farace, *Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*
- Jane Hess, *Office of the General Counsel*
- Joanne Weiss, *Director, Race to the Top Program*
- Ann Whalen, *Special Assistant to the Secretary*

and supporting the webinar participants—

- Jessica McKinney, *Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Understanding the Priorities and Selection Criteria

Lessons from Phase 1

The Criteria: Issues to Clarify

Your Questions

Lessons from Phase 1

Build on Your State's Strengths

- Build from what you know is working in your State (rather than simply importing plans from elsewhere).
  - Look at what your highest performing districts and charters are doing right. What's worth replicating?
  - Look to your State's universities and nonprofits for help with evaluation and for programs worth replicating.
  - Look to local foundations, CBOs, business groups, and education advocacy organizations; consider drawing from their ideas and expertise.

Implementation Matters

- Reviewers were looking for information to determine if plans were of high quality and likely to be successful.
- They followed the guidance in Application Requirement (e) that a high-quality plan includes—
  1. Key goals
  2. Key activities and rationale for the activities (*i.e.*, why the activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals)
  3. Timeline for implementation
  4. Person/team responsible for implementation
  5. Performance measures (where applicable)
  6. Evidence (where applicable) to help peer reviewers judge the credibility of the plan

Key Differentiators

- There were big differences between higher- and lower-ranked States in the areas of:
  - Great Teachers and Leaders (Section D) – finalists scored **33** points higher than non-finalists
  - State Success Factors (Section A) – finalists scored **23** points higher
  - Turning around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (Section E) – finalists scored **15** points higher

Other Observations

- Be **clear and concise**. Make it easy for reviewers to understand the heart of your plan. Avoid jargon, buzzwords, and acronyms.
- Be **honest and forthright** – admitting faults and roadblocks makes your plan more credible.
- Explain how you arrived at the **"ambitious yet achievable" performance measures** you propose.
  - Peer reviewers considered both "ambitious" and "achievable" in their assessments. A fourth-year goal of 100% is not the "right answer" if you can't achieve it.
  - Your performance measures should be real goals based on your plans. Remember, your progress on achieving these goals will be considered in determining the funds you have access to during the project.

The Most Important Thing…

- There are no silver bullets in education or in this competition. Many factors (criteria) matter.
- This competition is about moving reform forward on a lot of fronts, and that's necessarily complex. The scoring system represents that complexity.
- States that are reapplying should look carefully at their scores, comments, and application to see where they can improve. In Phase 1…every point mattered.

Fact Check #1: Union Support

- Bold reform and broad stakeholder support is a winning combination. But watered-down reform and broad stakeholder support is not. Bold reform *matters* – a lot of points are there!
- This competition rewards the balance across three interrelated factors:
  - **Bold reforms**…
  - That will be **implemented** (*i.e.*, LEAs and unions are on board with the bold reforms)…
  - Across enough LEAs that the proposed plans will "move the needle" on student outcomes **statewide**.

Fact Check #2: LEA Participation

- See prior slide…
- Under Criterion (A)(1)(iii), States receive points based on their statewide impact.
- Tennessee and Delaware got there through 100% participation, but there are other ways to move the needle.

Fact Check #3: "Soviet Judges" Decided the Competition

- The Department has done extensive analyses on all of the data and no judge skewed the results in any consistent way.
- Hard and easy scorers:
  - As expected, some reviewers were slightly harder graders than their peers; some were slightly easier.
  - However, there was no relationship between a State's score and the average strictness of its panel of reviewers:
    - Higher-scoring States did not have panels composed of easy scorers.
    - Lower-scoring States did not have panels composed of hard scorers.

Fact Check #3: "Soviet Judges" Decided the Competition (cont.)

- "Outlier" scores?
  - As expected, some panels largely agreed about the quality of a State's application; others differed.
  - In some panels, one reviewer had a substantially higher or lower judgment of the quality of the application than did his or her peers, and the scores reflected this diversity of opinion. In each such instance, the reviewer's comments justified the given score.
  - After the review was completed, the Department examined the scores and determined that no reviewers were consistent "outliers."
- We know people would like even more details on how the competition "worked" – it's on our agenda for later today.

The Decision to Cap Budgets

- Phase 1 budgets exceeded the maximum ranges by an average of 40% and in some cases considerably more. Without caps for Phase 2, we would likely have to deny funding to too many extraordinary proposals from deserving States.
- The Secretary believes this decision is in the best interests of the nation's students.
- Even with the cap, most successful States stand to be awarded hundreds of millions of dollars. That's a lot of money to drive reform.

The Decision to Cap Budgets (cont.)

- Budget caps for Phase 2:

Category 1 – $350-700 M	CA, TX, NY, FL
Category 2 – $200-400 M	IL, PA, OH, GA, MI, NC, NJ
Category 3 – $150-250 M	VA, AZ, IN, WA, MA, MO, MD, WI
Category 4 – $60-175 M	MN, CO, AL, LA, SC, PR, KY, OK, OR, CT, UT, MS, IA, AR, KS, NV
Category 5 – $20-75 M	NM, NE, ID, WV, NH, ME, HI, RI, MT, SD, AK, ND, VT, WY, DC

The Criteria: Issues to Clarify

MOUs (Criterion (A)(1))

Common Standards Adoption (Criterion (B)(1))

School Improvement Grants and Race to the Top (Criterion (E)(2))

STEM Matters (Competitive Priority)

Performance Measures

Do States that are Reapplying Need New MOUs for Phase 2?

- You don’t need new MOUs from your participating LEAs as long as the MOUs from Phase 1 remain accurate and applicable to your Phase 2 application.
- If you make changes to your Phase 2 application that affect MOU terms and conditions or scopes of work, then you do need to update your MOUs to reflect these changes and re-execute them.
- Even if the MOUs don’t have to be revised, make sure your participating LEAs understand their commitments, consistent with your Phase 2 proposal.

How to Handle Conditional MOUs
Criterion (A)(1)(ii)

- Many States did not follow the guidance we issued in our FAQs about how to handle plans that required changes to collective bargaining agreements (see FAQ K-16).
- Here's what the guidance requires:
  - IF some (or all) of a State's participating LEAs will need to modify collective bargaining agreements before they can commit to implementing certain parts of a State's plan…
  - THEN the State may draft their MOUs in a way that reflects the LEA's conditional commitment to implement specific plans, pending changes to collective bargaining agreements…
  - IN WHICH CASE the State *may not count those LEAs* as *participating* in those elements of its reform plan.
  - On the DETAILED TABLE that is evidence for (A)(1), mark a "C" for "Conditional" (do not put "Y" for "Yes"). In the narrative, feel free to make your case for why this conditional commitment is still meaningful or likely to be achieved.

How to Handle Conditional MOUs

Detailed Table for (A)(1)

(See application p. 22)

Detailed Table for (A)(1)
This table provides detailed information on the participation of each participating LEA (as defined in this notice). States should use this table to complete the Summary Tables above. (Note: If the State has a large number of participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), it may move this table to an appendix. States should provide in their narrative a clear reference to the appendix that contains the table.)

	LEA Demographics			Signatures on MOUs			MOU Terms	Preliminary Scope of Work – Participation in each applicable Plan Criterion															
Participating LEAs	# of Schools	# of K-12 Students	# of K-12 Students in Poverty	LEA Supt. (or equivalent)	President of local school board (if applicable)	President of Local Teachers Union (if applicable)	Uses Standard Terms & Conditions?	(B)(3)	(C)(3)(i)	(C)(3)(ii)	(C)(3) (iii)	(D)(2) (i)	(D)(2) (ii)	(D)(2) (iii)	(D)(2)(iv)(a)	(D)(2)(iv)(b)	(D)(2)(iv)(c)	(D)(2) (iv)(d)	(D)(3)(i)	(D)(3)(ii)	(D)(5)(i)	(D)(5)(ii)	(E)(2)
Name of LEA here				Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Yes/ No	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA

If an LEA's participation in a certain reform plan is conditioned upon changes to CBAs, show that on this table. You may enter "C" for "Conditional" instead of "N" for "No." You **may not** enter "Y" for "Yes."

Enter "C" in relevant columns and explain in your narrative.

How to Handle Conditional MOUs

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b) Scopes of Work

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments		
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems		
(ii) Professional development on use of data		
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers		
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth		
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems		
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations		
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development		
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention		
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification		
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools		
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development		
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development		
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools		

Fill in totals and percentages on this Summary Table – only "YESES" move to this table

(See application p. 20)

How to Handle Conditional MOUs

Peer Reviewer Point-of-View

- Peer reviewers will read your MOUs and can distinguish among different types of conditions.
- We will be emphasizing this in the Phase 2 reviewer training.
- Use your narratives to be clear and straightforward about the conditions your LEAs have signed up to…when the reviewers have to be malarkey detectors, they become quite skeptical.

How Reviewers Assessed Different Conditional MOUs – Example 1

- "Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures afforded school or school district employees under Federal, State, or local laws (including applicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between such employees and their employers. By way of the signatures below, the LEA and local collective bargaining representative agree to confer in good faith over matters within the scope of the MOU and agree further that those portions of the MOU subject to collective bargaining shall be implemented only upon the agreement of the LEA and the local collective bargaining representative."

Reviewer Comment:

"This is a substantial level of participation but is undercut by the MOU opt-out provision which is likely to limit the engagement of districts on some of the sensitive RTTT elements such as the teacher evaluation and compensation provisions."

How Reviewers Assessed Different Conditional MOUs – Example 2

- "The parties to any applicable collective bargaining agreement will use their best efforts to negotiate any terms and conditions in the agreement necessary for the full implementation of the State Plan. The parties understand that the failure to negotiate any term or condition in a collective bargaining agreement necessary for full implementation of the State Plan will result in termination of the grant."

Reviewer Comment:
The MOU "requires participating districts to implement all elements of the proposal. It incorporates the theory of reform and precludes participation from those districts that can't garner union support… it is a serious commitment to agree to be a participating LEA."

Common Standards Adoption (Criterion (B)(1)(ii))

- Criterion (B)(1)(ii), on adopting common standards, is the only criterion that operates differently in Phase 2 than in Phase 1.
- Both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 criterion versions were published with the original application and notices. Here's what it says for Phase 2:
  - For Phase 2 applications, the State's adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.
- Reviewer guidance for Phase 2 was also provided (see scoring rubric):
  - "High" points are earned for Phase 2 applicants' adoption by August 2, 2010 (20 points).
  - No "Medium" points are assigned for this criterion.
  - "Low" points are earned for a high-quality plan to adopt by a later specified date in 2010 (0-5 points).
  - No points are earned for a plan that is not high-quality or for a plan to adopt later than 2010.

Common Standards Adoption (Criterion (B)(1)(ii)) (cont.)

How to notify ED of your adoption status:

- If you have adopted a common set of K-12 standards by the time of application, please provide evidence of that adoption in your application.
- If you have not adopted a common set of K-12 standards by the time of application, but intend to do so prior to August 2:
  - Describe in your application what your plan is, and note your intent to submit an amendment (if your plans change, please notify us via email).
  - On or before August 2, 2010 submit an amendment to your application demonstrating that you have adopted common standards (see p. 99 of the Phase 2 application for amendment submission instructions).
- If you have not adopted a common set of K-12 standards by the time of application, but intend to do so later in 2010, describe your "high-quality plan" for doing so in your application (*see* criterion (B)(1)(ii)).

School Improvement Grants and Race to the Top (Criterion (E)(2))

- The definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools (PLAs) must be consistent in both Race to the Top and School Improvement Grant (SIG) applications (all States should have SIG-approved definitions by June 1). Additionally—
  - Race to the Top allows States to identify non-Title I eligible secondary schools if they are performing similarly to their PLAs (criterion (E)(2)(i)). SIG does not permit this.
  - SIG requires States to identify Tier III schools and permits States to add schools to Tiers I and II that are not identified as PLAs. This is not part of Race to the Top.
- Race to the Top and SIG funds support similar work, but the State role and timelines vary:
  - Race to the Top asks a State to provide a high-quality plan to support LEAs in turning around PLAs (criterion (E)(2)(ii)), while the SIG application requires a State to describe and provide evidence of how it will review and evaluate LEA applications, grant awards, and monitor implementation.
  - Race to the Top asks a State to provide the number of PLAs in which one of the four intervention models will be implemented each year over the next 4 years. (See Performance Measures for (E)(2)(ii).) For FY09 funds, SIG focuses on the process and implementation of one of the four intervention models in PLAs starting next year (*i.e.*, school year 2010-2011).

STEM Competitive Priority

- For the STEM competitive priority, applicants can ONLY receive zero points or the full 15 points. This means that the STEM priority can make a big difference in a State's score.
- Here's how the scoring works: if a *majority* of the reviewers determine that the State has met the priority, then the State earns the full 15 points.
- The State writes to this priority throughout its entire application, and may also provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority.

STEM Competitive Priority (cont.)

To meet this priority, the State's application must have a high-quality plan that addresses all three aspects of the STEM priority:

i. offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering;

ii. cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and

iii. prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Your Questions

Your Questions

What questions do you have regarding the criteria?

A. State Success Factors
B. Standards and Assessments
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction
D. Great Teachers and Leaders
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools
F. General Selection Criteria

Presentation of Successful Applications

The Delaware Team

- Lillian Lowery, *Secretary of Education*
- Dan Cruce, *Deputy Secretary and Chief of Staff*
- Diane Donohue, *Delaware State Education Association President*
- Emily Falcon, *Director Financial Reform Resources*
- Jim Palmer, *Race to the Top Implementation Team*

The Tennessee Team

- Erin O'Hara, *Education Policy Advisor, Governor's Office of State Planning and Policy*
- Dr. Tim Webb, *Commissioner of Education, Tennessee Department of Education*
- Gwen Watson, *Executive Director , Office of Achievement Gap Elimination, Tennessee Department of Education*
- Will Pinkston, *Managing Director, Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE)*

Panel Discussion and Q&A:

Building and Implementing a Statewide Strategy

Building and Implementing a Statewide Strategy

- Defining and developing a strategic agenda for the State
- The role of State laws
- LEA and teacher participation and implementation

Panel Discussion and Q&A:

Developing Reform Plans

Developing Reform Plans

- Transitioning to new standards and assessments
- Data systems
- Teachers and leaders
- Turnarounds
- STEM

Developing Detailed Budgets

Budget

Budget Summary (pg. 56)

a. **Table**: Total proposed budget, by category.
b. **Narrative:** Overview of how the budget has been organized into projects.

Project-Level Budgets (pg. 58)

a. **Table:** Budget for each project, by category.
b. **Narrative:** Backup detail for each category in each project budget.

Budget Summary

Budget Summary - Table

Budget Part I: Summary Budget Table (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(2)(i)(d))					
Budget Categories	**Project Year 1**	**Project Year 2**	**Project Year 3**	**Project Year 4**	**Total**
1. Personnel					
2. Fringe Benefits					
3. Travel					
4. Equipment					
5. Supplies					
6. Contractual					
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other					
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)					
10. Indirect Costs*					
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)					
14. Funding Subgranted to Participating LEAs (50% of Total Grant)					
15. Total Budget (lines 13-14)					

All applicants must provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-15.
Columns (a) through (d): For each project year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applica budget category.
Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all project years.
*If you plan to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to lines 11-12.

Includes totals across all project-level budgets.

(See application p. 56)

Budget Summary – Narrative

- Describe the overall structure of, and rationale for, the State's proposed Race to the Top budget, including:
  - The list of projects that have project-level budgets.
  - An explanation of why these projects were organized in this manner.
  - Specific elements that you want to draw the readers' attention to.
  - Anything that is not covered elsewhere in the project-level budget descriptions.

(See application p. 55-57)

Budget Summary – Narrative (cont.)

- Provide sufficient detail
  - Reviewers need to draw connections to State's overall plan – match your budget to your plans!
  - Ensure consistency between budget narratives and figures in budget tables.
- Plan for leveraging other funds
  - Explain how other Federal, State, and local funds will be leveraged to further support Race to the Top education reform plans.
    - For Example: School Improvement Grants, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grants, Teacher Incentive Fund grants, and Title I.

Project-Level Budgets

Project-Level Budgets

- Detail is important.
- The number of projects will vary from State to State. That's fine – just make sure your projects tie directly to your plans.
- Err on the side of providing too much detail rather than not enough.
- For Phase 2, we don't have a lot of time to review and revise your budgets. Submit accurate, complete, and clear budgets with your proposal so that budgets don't have to be cut because they are insufficiently supported!

Project-Level Budget

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table **Project Name:** [fill in the project name the State has assigned to this work] **Associated with Criteria:** [fill in the designations of the criteria associated with this project] **(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(2)(i)(d))**					
Budget Categories	**Project Year 1 (a)**	**Project Year 2 (b)**	**Project Year 3 (c)**	**Project Year 4 (d)**	**Total (e)**
1. Personnel					
2. Fringe Benefits					
3. Travel					
4. Equipment					
5. Supplies					
6. Contractual					
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other					
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)					
10. Indirect Costs*					
11.Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)					

All applicants must provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-15.
Columns (a) through (d): For each project year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.
Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all project years.
*If you plan to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to lines 11-12.

Project-Level Budget

1) **Personnel**

- Title
- Salary
- Time on project (hours or percentage of time)
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

2) **Fringe Benefits**

- Percentages for all personnel
- Basis for cost estimates or computations

Project-Level Budget (cont.)

3) Travel

- Estimated number of trips
  - For each trip – estimate of transportation, lodging, and meal costs
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

4) Equipment

- Type of equipment
- Estimated unit cost
- State's definition of equipment
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

Project-Level Budget (cont.)

5) Supplies

- List materials and supplies by nature of expense or general category (*e.g.*, instructional materials, office supplies)
- The basis for cost estimates or computations

Project-Level Budget (cont.)

6) Contractual

- Describe products and/or professional services to be provided (tied to your plan)
- Estimated cost per expected procurement and detailed basis for cost estimates
- For professional services contracts, the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to this proposed grant award
- A brief statement that the State has followed the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

Note: Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

Project-Level Budget (cont.)

7) Training Stipends

- Descriptions of training stipends to be provided
- The cost estimates and basis for these estimates

8) Other

- Other items by major type or category (*e.g.*, communications, printing, postage, equipment rental)
- The cost per item (*e.g.*, printing = $500, postage = $750)
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

9) Total Direct Costs

Project-Level Budget (cont.)

10) Indirect Costs

11) Funding for Involved LEAs

- Specific activities to be done by involved LEAs
- The estimated cost of each activity
- The approximate number of LEAs involved in each activity
- The total cost of each activity (across all involved LEAs)
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs

- The type of activity
- The estimated cost of each activity, and its cost basis
- The approximate number of LEAs involved in each activity

Project-Level Budget – Examples

Personnel

Personnel: The following requested personnel will all be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Total
Project Director (1): Jane Doe will be responsible for the overall leadership and management of the Performance-Based Teacher and Principal Compensation Program. She is an expert in this area and has worked on this issue for six years. She will report to the Race to the Top project director and be responsible for negotiating details related to the performance-based programs proposed in the plan associated with (D)(2). Her qualifications are described in detail in the project management plan on page A-24 of the Appendix.	80%	$65,000	$52,000

Project-Level Budget – Examples (cont.)

Travel

Travel: Travel expenses include the average mile reimbursements of $100 each, in addition to an amount of per diem of $5 0.	# Trips	$ per Trip	Total
A kick -off conference will provide technical assistance to our participating 325 districts. The conference will last two full days. A more detailed justification for this trip is explained in the narrative for selection criterion (A)(2).	325x3 people (1 Project Dir. & 2 staff per district.)	$200	$195,000

A Note on Budgets for Participating LEAs

- States are not required to provide budgets describing how participating LEAs will use their section 14006(c) funds (see line 14 of the Budget Summary Table).
- However, the Department expects States to monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that participating LEAs spend these funds in accordance with the State's plan and the scope of work described in the agreement between the State and the participating LEA.
- If the State is awarded a Race to the Top grant, its participating LEAs (including those that submitted too late to be included in the application) will have up to 90 days to complete final scopes of work, workplans, and budgets. At the conclusion of that period, States will notify LEAs of their final section 14006(c) subgrants.

(See application p. 57)

Additional Considerations

- Numbers in the budgets should add-up correctly.
- The amounts in the narrative should match the amounts included in the budget tables.
- Budgets should be sufficiently specific to judge whether costs are necessary, reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
- Costs, including contractual costs, should be justified.
- Pre-award costs are not allowable under this competition; however, expenses may begin once awards are announced.

Department Review

- The Department is required to conduct a review of the budgets in discretionary grant award requests before a grant is approved and funded.
- Potential grantees must cooperate with the Department in budget reviews before awards are made.
- The Department has discretion in determining the final amount of any competitive grant award. The Department has authority to reduce budgets.
- Let's say it again: For Phase 2, we don't have a lot of time to review and revise your budgets. Submit accurate, complete, and clear budgets with your proposal so that budgets don't have to be cut because they are insufficiently supported!

Department Review

- **Allowable** (or not prohibited) by the statute, regulations, or governing cost principles
  - *Is the cost allowed (or not prohibited) by statute, regulation, or the governing cost principles?*

- **Allocable** to the project
  - *Does the item or activity specifically benefit this project?*

Department Review

- **Necessary and reasonable** for the proper and efficient administration and performance of the grant
  - *Would a prudent person have paid this price?*

- **Consistent treatment**
  - *Is the cost being treated consistently by the grantee?*

Application Review and Submission

Review Process

Reviewer Recommendations

Application Submission

Application Review Process

Application Review Process

The Big Picture:

1. Assigning applications to reviewers
2. Training reviewers
3. Preliminary application review
4. Panel review and application scoring
5. Preparing for finalist presentations
6. Finalist presentations
7. Panel review and finalist scoring

Assigning Applications to Reviewers

- The Department engaged in a rigorous process to identify highly qualified and unbiased reviewers from a pool of 1,500 applicants and nominees.
- Each application was assigned to 5 reviewers randomly.
  - Reviewers were assigned up to 5 applications each.
  - Reviewers were not assigned to States where they lived or had potential conflicts.
  - If a reviewer discovered a potential conflict while reading an application, that application was reassigned.
- This resulted in 41 unique panels, one for each application, and each with a different set of panelists.

Training and Initial Review

Training Reviewers

- Reviewers received training on:
  - Understanding the criteria (consistent with the TA workshop that the State applicants attended);
  - How to write comments; and
  - How to use the scoring software.

Preliminary Application Review

- Reviewers read, scored and commented ***independently.***
- ED staff provided feedback on whether the comments were clearly written, justified the scores, and were consistent with the criteria and scoring rubric.

Panel Review and Application Scoring (Tier 1)

- The Department held an orientation session for reviewers.
- Each panel met in person for 4 hours to discuss its assigned application:
  - To help reviewers focus their discussion, we provided each panel with data showing how their scores varied for each criterion.
  - Discussion focused on understanding why reviewers disagreed and ensuring that scoring differences were based on different professional judgments of quality (as opposed to different understandings of the criteria).
  - Department staff clearly explained that the goal of these discussions was not for reviewers to come to consensus on their scores.

Panel Review and Application Scoring (cont.)

- Reviewers independently revised their scores and comments, as necessary.
- The Department ensured quality control on all applications:
  - An ED panel monitor reviewed all comments and scores; and
  - A member of the competition support team (career staff expert in the program) reviewed all comments and scores.
- Reviewer scores were averaged, and the STEM priority points were added, to determine the score for each applicant.
- These scores were used to generate a rank-ordered "slate" and the Secretary determined the finalists.

Preparing for Finalist Presentations (Tier 2)

- The Department hosted a conference call to provide State finalists with information about their presentations (and posted online the accompanying written materials).
- The Department held an orientation session for reviewers.
- Each panel met to discuss and plan the high-priority questions they wanted to ask the State presenters, and selected one reviewer to act as facilitator (75 minutes).

Finalist Presentations

- States presented their applications and responded to questions from their panels of reviewers (90 minutes).
  - Presentations were videotaped for public posting and viewing.
  - Presentations were attended in person only by the reviewers, panel monitors, career staff directly involved in the competition, and the AV team.

Panel Review and Finalist Scoring

- Each panel met to discuss the State's presentation (2 hours).
- Reviewers independently revised their scores and comments based on finalist presentations.
- Again, the Department ensured quality control on all applications:
  - An ED panel monitor reviewed all comments and scores; and
  - A member of the competition support team (career staff expert in the program) reviewed all comments and scores.
- Reviewers' scores were averaged, and the STEM priority points, if any, were added, to determine the score for each finalist.
- These scores were used to generate a rank-ordered slate and the Secretary determined the grantees.

Transparency Initiative

Documents Available Online:

- Applications
- Scores and comments
- Tier 2 presentation videos
- Peer reviewer information:
  - Explanation of the peer reviewer selection process
  - Peer reviewer training materials
  - Reviewer names and bios

www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/

Improvements Under Consideration for Phase 2

1. **Reviewer training**
   - Real examples from Phase 1 applications and comments.
2. **Scoring system technology**
3. **Other considerations**
   - Decrease the number of applications per reviewer?

Reviewer Recommendations

Developing your Plan

Communicating your Plan in your Application

Format and Organization

Developing your Plan

- Use criterion (A)(1)(i) to articulate your State's broad "theory of change." Use this as an "executive summary" of your proposal, and make it the foundation for a coherent and comprehensive plan.
  - Ensure a common narrative throughout plan – don't have disjointed sections or silos of reform.
  - Make it clear how the pieces fit together into a larger vision.
- Engage relevant experts:
  - Content expertise (*e.g.*, STEM, literacy, data)
  - Leverage existing State strategies and reforms
  - Include perspectives that represent both "top down" and "bottom up"

Developing your Plan (cont.)

- Be honest and straightforward.
  - Credibility matters – Acknowledging problems and areas of weakness head-on demonstrates that the State understands the issue.
  - Clarity and specificity matter – being vague can reduce the reliability of your plan.
  - Set realistic benchmarks and goals.

Communicating your Plan in your Application

- Translate your plan into an application narrative.
  - Think through "information flow" – are you building and communicating a persuasive argument?
  - Remember, each reviewer is reading all sections: communicate your reform plan with "one voice."

"Connect the dots between vision, mission, goals, objectives, strategy, tactics, and anticipated outcomes."

Communicating your Plan in your Application (cont.)

- Be responsive to the criteria.
  - Align your State's plan to specific criteria – and be clear in how you do so. Consider using headers that match criteria as signposts to help your readers.
  - Address all parts of each criterion.
  - Tell the reviewers "what," "why," and "how."

"If the question asks about teachers and principals, be sure that your response focuses on BOTH teachers AND principals."

Communicating your Plan in your Application (cont.)

- Ensure that your evidence is clearly communicated and supports the narrative – not tacked on or disconnected from your argument.
- If requested data are not available, indicate so early on.
- Long narratives do not hide lack of data.

"[Relying on] partial information damages whatever trust you have built up in the application."

Format and Organization

- Use criterion (A)(1)(i) to provide an executive summary.
- Include a Table of Contents.
- Refer, in the application, to relevant page numbers in the appendices.
- Provide information in the appropriate sections – when reviewers have to search all over your application narrative or appendix for relevant information, it makes them cranky!
- Use topic sentences and opening statements that provide direction for the reader.
- Clearly present or reference within your application any information that reviewers need in order to assign a score.

Format and Organization (cont.)

- Be clear and succinct.
- Avoid buzzwords and acronyms.
- Structure according to the selection criteria and clearly mark sections according to selection criteria headings.
- Provide information at the "romanette" level when possible.
- Paginate!

"More is not necessarily better and you risk losing your reader."

Format and Organization (cont.)

Before Submitting:

- Make it into a PDF…then
- Proof-read the final document.

Verify that:

- Page numbers are correct in the Table of Contents.
- All sections of the application are included.
- Contents are legible.

Application Submission

Application Submission

- **Submitting your application in two PDFs is STRONGLY encouraged:**
  - One PDF containing the application narrative; and
  - A second PDF containing all appendices (and start this with a Table of Contents for the appendices)
- Submit on CD or DVD.
- Files must be in .DOC,.DOCX, .RTF , or .PDF format.

Application Submission

- Submit a signed original of Sections III and IV of the application (the signature/assurances) and one copy of that signed original.
- Indicate CFDA number 84.395A on the mailing envelope.
- Send your application via overnight mail or hand delivery. (Note that there are different addresses for overnight mail versus hand delivery.)

Do Not Send an Application to Each Address – Choose One!

- Applications must be received (not postmarked!) by 4:30 p.m. (Washington DC time) on **June 1, 2010**.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Application Submission

Overnight mail:	Hand delivery (including courier services):
U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center Attention: (CFDA Number 84.395A) LBJ Basement Level 1 400 Maryland Avenue, SW. Washington, DC 20202-4260	U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center c/o Joyce Mays Attention: (CFDA Number 84.395A) 550 12th Street, SW. Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza Washington, DC 20202-4260

Final Q&A and Closing

Resources and Assistance

Website: www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop

- *Application for Phase 2*
- *Frequently Asked Questions* (updated regularly)

Start with these

- *Executive Summary of Race to the Top Notice of Final Priorities*
- *Notice Inviting Applications*
- *Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, Definitions, and Selection Criteria*
- Presentations and transcripts (for all calls and convenings)

Questions: racetothetop@ed.gov or 202-205-3775