

U.S. Department of Education: Race to the Top Program

Webinar: Understanding the Application

November 24, 2009



Thank you for joining us this afternoon. This call is designed for the people in the State with primary responsibility for completing the application. Our goal here is to orient you to how the pieces of the application fit together, so that as you start work, you waste no time. We'll take as many calls as we have time for today. We'll also make it clear how you can get your questions answered if we don't have time today – or if you think of new questions tomorrow!

Agenda

- Overview of Race to the Top Fund and Timelines
- Overview of the Notice Inviting Applications
- How the Pieces Fit Together: Selection Criteria, Evidence, Performance Measures, and Scoring Rubric
 - State Reform Conditions Criteria
 - Reform Plan Criteria
- Planning Considerations
- Submitting an Application
- Resources and Assistance

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Because I believe many of you attended the prior conference call, we'll skip quickly through the overview of the program, and launch into the meat. We want to pay particular attention, in this call, to giving you a big-picture orientation to the Notice Inviting Applications, so you know what to look for and where to find it; and to walking you through examples from the application itself, so you can see how the pieces fit together. We'll end with some things to consider as you're putting your work plan together for the next few weeks.

About Race to the Top

- \$4.35B competitive grant to encourage and reward states implementing comprehensive reforms across four key areas:
 - Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace
 - Recruiting, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals
 - Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices
 - Turning around the lowest-performing schools
- With an overarching goal of:
 - Driving substantial gains in student achievement
 - Improving high school graduation and college enrollment
 - Narrowing achievement gaps

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As all of you know, Race to the Top is a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward states for implementing comprehensive reforms across four key areas, all with an overarching goal of significantly increasing student achievement, increasing high school graduation and college enrollment rates, and decreasing achievement gaps.

Public Comments

- Clarified and strengthened competition based on public comments:
 - Received nearly 1,200 comments, ranging from one paragraph to 67 pages
 - Heard from individuals in all 50 States; over 550 individuals (mostly parents and teachers), 200 organizations, unions, and elected officials
- Stayed firm in commitment to four reforms, but listened and made many specific changes in response to what we heard

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Based on the input we received during the public comment period – almost 1,200 comments in all – we clarified and strengthened the competition. These comments ranged from 1 paragraph to 67 pages and came from all 50 states. We heard from over 550 individuals – mostly parents and teachers. We also heard from approximately 200 organizations and associations, both unions, and dozens of elected officials and school chiefs (including many of you). We were heartened by the passion expressed across the country, and hope that this strong interest translates into broad stakeholder engagement in your states.

Overall, we stayed firm in our commitment to the four core reform areas – high, common standards; great teachers and leaders; data to inform decisions and improve practices; and turning around states' lowest-achieving schools.

Competition Timeline

Race to the Top – Phase 1

Nov 18, 2009	Notices published in the Federal Register
January 19, 2010	Application deadline for Phase 1
April 2010	Winners announced for Phase 1 Feedback provided to applicants who do not win

Race to the Top – Phase 2

June 1, 2010	Application deadline for Phase 2
September 2010	Winners announced for Phase 2

You see the dates here, and we reviewed them in the prior call – the one thing I'd like to remind you is that, unlike other Recovery Act programs, the grant term for Race to the Top is 4 years. So grantees will have from 2010 through the 2013-14 school year to spend down their funds.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- Absolute: Comprehensive approach to education reform
- Competitive: Emphasis on STEM
- Invitational: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- Invitational: Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- Invitational: P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- Invitational: School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

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Let's start, then, with a look at the sections of the Notice Inviting Applications. I'll give you a quick orientation to each section.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

basic information about what must be in the application

- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

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The Application Requirements section is important! It contains the basic information about what you must include in your application. (Note that what you see here isn't the full list of application requirements – read the notice for that.)

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

basic information about what must be in the application

- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

Remember that interactions will be required with people in your State with whom you might not typically do business. This will likely require careful advance planning – we'll talk more about this in a few minutes.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- Absolute: Comprehensive approach to education reform
- Competitive: Emphasis on STEM
- Invitational: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

← requirements for all Race to the Top grantees

- Invitational: Innovation and adaptation of existing data systems
- Invitational: State coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- Invitational: School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

The Program Requirements section describes requirements for States that are awarded Race to the Top grants.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- Absolute: Comprehensive approach to education reform
- Competitive: Emphasis on STEM
- Invitational: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- Invitational: Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- Invitational: P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- Invitational: School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Instruction
- Eligible
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

You are all familiar with the eligibility requirements, I know.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State’s attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization **prior to award**
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- **Absolute:** Comprehensive approach to education reform
- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Instruction
- Eligible
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

It is worth reiterating that, because the Stabilization Fund notice and the Race to the Top notice ended up on similar schedules, we relaxed the requirement that all Stabilization Fund applications be approved before a Race to the Top grant was submitted – now the SFSF applications are due before an award is made. Note that your SFSF Phase 2 applications are due on or before January 11.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements:

- Signatures of key personnel must address in application
- Certification from State: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- **Absolute:** Comprehensive approach to education reform
- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

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There is one absolute priority in this competition – you must comprehensively address all four education reform areas as well as the new State success factors.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from areas that earn competitive preference points
- State Reform Commission
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- **Absolute:** Comprehensive approach to education reform
- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

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There is one competitive preference priority – an emphasis on STEM. States that wish to address this priority should cover STEM issues in applicable places throughout their applications; States will be evaluated based on the three elements described in the priority. States that meet the priority will receive 15 points; others will receive no points – that is, these points (unlike others in the competition) are earned on an “all or nothing” basis.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other

- Evaluation
- Participating
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summative assessments

areas of interest that extend the core work – do not earn points

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- **Absolute:** Comprehensive approach to education reform
- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

Invitational priorities represent extensions to the core K-12 focus of Race to the Top that are of particular interest to the Secretary. However, these do not earn points.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summary accomplishments and plans that earn points

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- Absolute: Comprehensive approach to education reform
- Competitive: Emphasis on STEM
- Invitational: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- Invitational: Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- Invitational: P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- Invitational: School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- State success factors
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

The selection criteria are where we'll spend the bulk of our time today – these are the criteria you will write to throughout your application. These earn points.

Overview of the Notice

States must meet:

Application Requirements, e.g.:

- Signatures of key stakeholders
- Certification from State's attorney general re: descriptions of State laws
- State Reform Conditions requirements
- Reform Plan requirements

Program/Other Requirements:

- Evaluation
- Participating LEA scope of work
- Make work available
- Technical assistance
- State summary accomplishments and plans that earn points

Eligibility Requirements:

- Approved for State Fiscal Stabilization prior to award
- No legal barriers at State level to linking student achievement data to teachers and principals for purposes of evaluation

Applications will be scored based on:*

Priorities:

- **Absolute:** Comprehensive approach to education reform
- **Competitive:** Emphasis on STEM
- **Invitational:** Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes
- **Invitational:** Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems
- **Invitational:** P-20 coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment
- **Invitational:** School-level conditions for reform, innovation, and learning

Selection Criteria:

- **State success factors**
- Standards and assessments
- Data systems to support instruction
- Great teachers and leaders
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools
- General

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* Note that invitational priorities are not scored.

Before we talk more about the selection criteria, I did want to remind you to look carefully at the State Success Factors because they are a new section that was not in the proposed notice. They offer States the opportunity to put a “front end organizer” on the application – a section States can use to explain to reviewers their statewide reform agenda, including how all of the pieces fit together to form a plan that can credibly be expected to improve student achievement, increase graduation and college enrollment rates, and decrease achievement gaps.

Additional Information in the Notices

- Scoring Rubric and Points (see Appendix B in all notices)
- Budget Guidance (in the notice inviting applications)
- Competition Review and Selection Process (in the notice inviting applications)
- Guidance on signing up LEAs (part of criterion (A)(1)) (see Appendix D in all notices – also see FAQs)
- Evaluation (in the program/other requirements section of all notices)

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A few more things we want you to be aware of in the notices:

- First, we released the points allocations and the scoring rubric that reviewers will use to judge applications. We'll talk in a few moments about how this will help you in preparing your applications. You'll find the rubric in Appendix B in every notice.
- Second, we released budget guidance. You'll find this in the notice inviting applications. As a reminder, we organized the States into 5 categories based on the number of students in the State. The award guidance ranges from \$20M-\$700M – but we want to reiterate that this guidance is nonbinding. The ranges are NOT minimums or maximums. States may propose budgets that are above or below the ranges we provided – the important thing is that the budgets match the work the State is proposing.
- Third, in the notice inviting applications we have also provided an overview of the Competition Review and Selection Process, which describes how the competition itself will be run. It is a two-tiered review process. In tier one, reviewers will read applications and award points for each criterion. The high-scoring applicants will be invited to DC for the finalist tier, where States will present their applications to reviewers and engage in Q&A.
- Finally, we know how much confusion there was around signing up LEAs to participate in the State's plan. We have attempted to clarify this in the final notices, offer thoughts on how to streamline the process, and provide a model MOU that States may use or modify if they feel it would be helpful. This information can be found in each of the notices as Appendix D. And there are FAQs about LEA participation as well.

How the Pieces Fit Together

Two Types of Selection Criteria

- **State Reform Conditions Criteria** - used to assess State's progress and success in creating conditions related to the four ARRA education reform areas.
- **Reform Plan Criteria** - used to assess State's plan for future efforts in the four ARRA education reform areas.

Now let's turn our attention to the application – first, you'll remember that there are two types of criteria. State Reform Conditions Criteria are used to assess a State's progress and success in creating conditions conducive to education reform. Reform Plan Criteria are used to assess a State's plans for future efforts – they describe what the State will do with its grant, should it win Race to the Top.

How the Pieces Fit Together

The Parts to Respond to...

For each criterion, there are up to three parts

- **Narrative:** For each criterion the State addresses, the State writes its narrative response in the space provided. Describe how the State has addressed or will address that criterion.
- **Performance Measures:** For several selection criteria, the State is asked to provide goals and annual targets, baseline data, and other information.
- **Evidence:** Some selection criteria require specific information requested as supporting evidence. States may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the State's plan.

When you start writing, there are three parts to keep in mind. In every case, you will write a narrative response to a criterion. This may include text, tables, charts or graphs – use whatever medium you need to in order to ensure clarity. Next, some criteria require performance measures. Finally, some criteria also require specific evidence. We're going to talk about these in a lot more detail on the next slides.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

• **Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.**

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

Let's start with an example of a State Reform Conditions criterion – this one is from page 29 of the application. It's where you'll respond to criterion (C)(1), fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

→ criterion

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

• Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

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(See application p. 29)

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At the top of the box, you'll find the criterion itself. In the in-person Technical Assistance Planning Workshops, we'll talk more about each criterion to ensure that you understand what they are asking.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

← criterion

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

- Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

22

(See application p. 29)

11/23/2009

Watch for the phrase “as defined in this notice.” Wherever you see it, it means there’s a definition in the notice that explains the meaning of the term. It’s a good idea to read these definitions carefully.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

directions

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

• **Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.**

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

23

(See application p. 29)

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In italics, you'll find directions about what to write.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

• Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

evidence

24

(See application p. 29)

11/23/2009

If evidence is requested, it is listed here. If the evidence is brief or narrative in nature, include it in your narrative response to the criterion. This will make it easy for reviewers to follow. If you need to provide supporting documentation, include it in an appendix and reference it in your narrative so that the reviewers can find it easily.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

• Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

pages

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

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(See application p. 29)

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Finally, each criterion includes a recommended maximum number of pages. These represent a “best guess” on the part of the Department about how long your response might be. These are not binding limits -- but do remember that, from a reviewer’s point of view, clarity matters and brevity will be appreciated.

State Reform Conditions Criterion Example

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
(24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Recommended maximum length:

(Enter text here.)

narrative

Application Requirement (d)

The State must provide, for each State Reform Conditions Criterion that it chooses to address, a description of the State's current status in meeting that criterion and, at a minimum, the information requested as supporting evidence for the criterion and the performance measures, if any.

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(See application p. 29)

This is where you start typing! Enter your response directly in the Application, which is a standard Microsoft Word document that you can download from the Department's website: www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop.

This is where close attention to the application requirements helps. Application requirement (d) provides general guidance on writing responses to State Reform Conditions criteria.

Reviewer Guidance Example (C)(1) (In Appendix B)

General Reviewer Guidance for (C)(1): In judging the quality of the applicant's response to this criterion, reviewers should refer to what the criterion asks and to the evidence requested in the application and presented by the applicant (if any).

Reviewer Guidance Specific to (C)(1):

- *Applicants earn two (2) points for every element the State has, out of 12 elements possible.*

(C)(1) (maximum total points: 24) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system: The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements.

Finally, it is a good idea, before you start writing, to look at the guidance that will be provided to the peer reviewers who will score the applications. In the application, you'll find the Scoring Rubric in Section XI, beginning on page 75. Here's the section of the rubric that deals with criterion (C)(1) – it's on page 82 of the application.

Reviewer Guidance Example (C)(1) (In Appendix B)

guidance
to
reviewers

General Reviewer Guidance for (C)(1): In judging the quality of the applicant's response to this criterion, reviewers should refer to what the criterion asks and to the evidence requested in the application and presented by the applicant (if any).

Reviewer Guidance Specific to (C)(1):

- *Applicants earn two (2) points for every element the State has, out of 12 elements possible.*

(C)(1) **(maximum total points: 24)** Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system: The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements.

In the boxed section you'll find the actual reviewer guidance on how to score the criterion. The general guidance matches the application requirement directions. The specific guidance, which is only provided for some criteria, offers reviewers more information on how to allocate points for this criterion.

Reviewer Guidance Example (C)(1) (In Appendix B)

General Reviewer Guidance for (C)(1): In judging the quality of the applicant's response to this criterion, reviewers should refer to what the criterion asks and to the evidence requested in the application and presented by the applicant (if any).

Reviewer Guidance Specific to (C)(1):

- *Applicants earn two (2) points for every element the State has, out of 12 elements possible.*

points

(C)(1) **(maximum total points: 24)** Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system: The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements.

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(See application p.82)

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After the reviewer guidance, the criterion text is included. The total points are shown here.

Reform Plan Criterion Example

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(Enter text here.)

Okay – now let's look at a different example – a Reform Plan criterion. This is (D)(4), improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs. You'll find this on p. 41 of your application.

Reform Plan Criterion Example

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

← criterion

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(Enter text here.)

31

(See application p.41)

11/23/2009

Again, we start with the criterion to be addressed.

Reform Plan Criterion Example

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(Enter text here.)

directions

32

(See application p.41)

11/23/2009

Then we provide directions.

You'll notice that there is no specific evidence requested for this criterion – although you are welcome to include any evidence that you feel will be helpful to reviewers.

Reform Plan Criterion Example

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

pages

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(Enter text here.)

33

(See application p.41)

11/23/2009

And we give a page recommendation. To be honest, we included this to show that you should take these recommendations as loose guidance. When I looked back at this one in preparation for today's meeting, I thought this was a bit short.

Reform Plan Criterion Example

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which targets to—

(i) Link student achievement to students' teachers and teachers and principal credentialing program

(ii) Expand preparation producing effective teachers

The State shall provide, at a minimum, the following information in its Reform Plan Criteria Requirements (e), for peer reviewers must include attachments included attachments can be found

Recommended maximum length (Enter text here.)

Application Requirement (e)

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;
- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable, and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

narrative

34

(See application p.41)

11/23/2009

This is where you type your response. Again, pay attention to application requirement (e), which describes the components of a high-quality plan. Such a plan includes goals, activities, timelines, and responsible individuals. It might also include evidence, if you have any that would support the credibility of your plan. Finally, it might also include performance measures – which we'll turn to next.

About Performance Measures

- Performance measures include goals and annual targets, baseline data, and other information.
- Where performance measures are required, tables are provided in the application.
- In addition, the State may provide additional performance measures, baseline data, and targets for any criterion it chooses.
- Reviewers will consider, as part of their evaluations of the State's application, the extent to which the State has set ambitious yet achievable annual targets for the performance measures in support of the State's plan.
- To minimize burden, performance measures have been requested only where the Department intends to report nationally on them and for measures that lend themselves to objective and comparable data gathering.

35

11/23/2009

Criterion (D)(4) has a number of performance measures associated with it. Performance measures include goals and annual targets, baseline data, and other information. Where performance measures are required, we have put tables right into the application. They come just after the narrative.

Reviewers will consider, as part of their evaluations, the extent to which the State has set ambitious yet achievable annual targets for the performance measures. What does this mean? They'll be looking for how you connect the plan in your narrative with your performance measures.

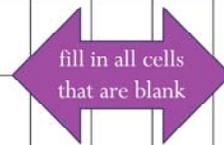
- Are you being ambitious in what you're attempting to do?
- And are you also being realistic in proposing a plan that you can achieve?
- Have you balanced ambition and achievement thoughtfully and well?

These are the questions reviewers will be asking themselves as they read your responses to plan criteria. To help reinforce the seriousness of these questions, we want to remind you that funding events could be triggered – or delayed or even withheld – based on the State's actual performance against the annual targets you set in your application, so consider them carefully.

Performance Measures Example (D)(4)

Goals: Baseline data and annual targets

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current School Year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.					
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.					
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					



Here, you fill in the actual/baseline data in the first column and annual targets in the next four columns. Reviewers will look for “ambitious yet achievable” targets. States will report status against these targets in annual reports to the Department.

36

(See application p.42)

11/23/2009

So now let's look at the mechanics of completing the application. There are three types of data requests – and criterion (D)(4) has all three (see p. 42-43).

First, there are “general goals,” which include current baseline data and annual targets for the four years of the grant. On all of the performance measures tables, you are going to fill in the cells that are blank. Here, you fill in the actual/baseline data in the first column and your annual targets in the next four columns.

Performance Measures Example (D)(4)

General data

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current School Year or most)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.					
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.					
Total number of teachers in the State.					
Total number of principals in the State.					
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					

This table is a general data collection form to support other calculations.
Again, fill in only blank cells...on this table, you would fill in only the first column.

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(See application p.42)

11/23/2009

The next type of information is “general data” that is used to support other calculations. Again – only fill in the blank cells. In this case, fill in the first column, which asks for actual/baseline data for the current school year across four areas.

Performance Measures Example (D)(4)

Heads-up: Data to be requested in annual reports

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of teacher credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of teachers prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					

There are no blank cells to fill in here – this table provides a heads-up that these data will be collected as part of annual reporting requirements in the future.

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(See application p.43)

11/23/2009

This third table, labeled “data to be requested of grantees in the future,” is a heads-up about the data that will be collected in the future as part of annual reporting requirements. We provided this now so that as you’re developing your plans, you can take this into account. There is nothing for you to fill in on this table.

A couple of additional notes. To minimize burden, performance measures have been requested only where the Department intends to report nationally on them and for measures that lend themselves to objective and comparable data gathering. Feel free to supplement as you see fit. Also, in the future, the Department may require grantees to submit additional performance data as part of an annual report, program evaluation, or other mechanism.

Reviewer Guidance Example (D)(4)

(In Appendix B)

General Reviewer Guidance for (D)(4): In judging the quality of the applicant's plan and annual targets for this criterion, reviewers should refer to what the criterion asks, to the evidence requested in the application and presented by the applicant (if any), and to the elements of a high-quality plan as set forth in application requirement (e).

Reviewer Guidance Specific to (D)(4):

- *The criterion must be judged for both teachers and principals.*

(D)(4) **(maximum total points: 14)** Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs: The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and

(ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

Finally, remember to look at the scoring rubric for criterion (D)(4) before you start writing.

Reviewer Guidance Example (D)(4)

(In Appendix B)

guidance
to
reviewers

General Reviewer Guidance for (D)(4): In judging the quality of the applicant's plan and annual targets for this criterion, reviewers should refer to what the criterion asks, to the evidence requested in the application and presented by the applicant (if any), and to the elements of a high-quality plan as set forth in application requirement (e).

Reviewer Guidance Specific to (D)(4):

- *The criterion must be judged for both teachers and principals.*

(D)(4) **(maximum total points: 14)** Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs: The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and

(ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

In this case, the general guidance points reviewers back to the application requirement, and the specific guidance just reminds reviewers to watch for both teachers and principals in the response.

Reviewer Guidance Example (D)(4)

(In Appendix B)

General Reviewer Guidance for (D)(4): In judging the quality of the applicant's plan and annual targets for this criterion, reviewers should refer to what the criterion asks, to the evidence requested in the application and presented by the applicant (if any), and to the elements of a high-quality plan as set forth in application requirement (e).

Reviewer Guidance Specific to (D)(4):

- *The criterion must be judged for both teachers and principals.*

points

(D)(4) **(maximum total points: 14)** Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs: The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and

(ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

41

(See application p.85)

11/23/2009

This criterion is worth 14 points. According to the Department's general administrative regulations (EDGAR), unless otherwise stated, points are evenly divided across a criterion's sections. In order to avoid partial points, all point totals are evenly divisible across their sections. In this case, each part would be worth 7 points.

Planning Considerations

- Lining up the certification from the State's Attorney General
 - At a minimum, the following responses include descriptions of and statements and conclusions concerning State law, statute, and regulation, and will therefore require AG review:
 - Eligibility requirement (b)
 - Selection criteria (B)(1), (D)(1), (E)(1), (F)(1), (F)(2), (F)(3)
- Enlisting LEA participation and collecting required data
 - Signing up LEAs – see criterion (A)(1), Appendix D, and FAQs
 - Some data elements may require States to collect information from participating LEAs – see especially criteria (A)(1), (D)(2), (D)(3)
- Completing the budget
- Lining up the three required signatures before you submit
- Bring questions with you to workshops

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11/23/2009

That's it for now in responding to the application. Before we take your questions, we wanted to point out a couple of things worthy of forethought as you're preparing your application work plans.

•First, remember that that State's Attorney General has to certify that all descriptions of, and statements and conclusions concerning, State laws, statutes, and regulations in the application are complete, accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of the State's laws, statutes, and regulations. We show here the sections of your application that are most likely implicated; be sure to address these with sufficient time to get the certification required.

•Next, you'll want to get going quickly with your LEAs. There are two issues to consider.

•First, you'll want to get your LEAs the information they'll need to help them decide if they're interested in participating with the State in the State's Race to the Top plan – and you'll want to get their signed agreements back if they are interested. Read Appendix D and the FAQs on participating LEAs for the Department's guidance on this.

•Second, there are some cases where you might need to collect data from participating LEAs in order to complete the performance measures in your application. Criteria (A)(1), (D)(2) and (D)(3) are most likely implicated here, so read those carefully. You might want to create a data collection instrument to send to participating LEAs.

•We'll talk more about all of this in the upcoming Technical Assistance Planning Workshops.

•Third, don't forget about the budget. It's in Section VIII of your application (p. 55).

•Finally, be sure you have the governor, state chief, and state board president lined up for signatures.

•And finally, we know we've given you a lot, but the more you can read prior to the Technical Assistance Planning Workshops, the better. Come with your questions in-hand.

Submitting an Application

- Submit a CD or DVD with files in .DOC, .DOCX, .RTF, or .PDF formats
- Submit a signed original of Sections III and IV of the application and one copy of that signed original
- Indicate CFDA number 84.395A on the mailing envelope
- Have your application hand delivered or mailed (overnight mail recommended) – note different addresses for hand delivery and overnight mail delivery
- Must be *received* (not postmarked!) by 4:30:00 p.m. (Washington, DC time) on the application deadline date
- ***We will not accept an application after 4:30:00 p.m., (Washington, DC time) on the application deadline date***

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11/23/2009

The last thing – submitting your application. You are required to submit your application on a CD or DVD; this will allow you to organize the files clearly and to provide a definitive and unchangeable version. The submission guidelines provided in the application are clear – but it's worth reiterating that we need to receive the application by the deadline – this is not the date by which your application must be postmarked. For this reason, we recommend that you hand deliver your application or have it sent by overnight mail.

Resources and Assistance

Website: www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop

- *Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, Definitions, and Selection Criteria*
 - *Notice Inviting Applications*
 - *Application*
- 

Supporting Materials:

- *Executive Summary of Race to the Top Notice of Final Priorities*
- *Frequently Asked Questions* (updated regularly)
- Presentations and transcripts (for all calls and convenings)

Technical Assistance:

- TA Planning Workshops (registration information is on the website):
December 3 (Denver) and December 10 (Washington DC area)
- TA Conference Calls: As needed

Email questions to racetothetop@ed.gov

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One last bit of information before we turn the floor over to you – we released a number of documents, totaling over 1,000 pages. We know how daunting this likely feels, so let us give you a quick tour of what you have and where to find information.

- The longest document, about 800 pages, is the notice of final priorities. This is so long because it contains the Department’s responses to the public comments we received.
- The most critical documents for States are the notice inviting applications and the application itself. These are the two documents I would study first.
- We also released an executive summary that is an excerpt from the notices. It includes the “policy” – the eligibility requirements, priorities, selection criteria, and definitions. This is not abridged information; it is complete. So you can use it for orientations, work planning, and so on.
- We will publish an FAQ document on our website shortly, and we will keep this regularly updated as we get questions from you.
- We will also publish this and all presentations and transcripts on our website so that if you miss a meeting or need a reminder, you can find it easily.
- Finally, if you have not yet done so, we encourage you to sign up for whichever of the two Technical Assistance Planning Workshops best meets your needs – registration information is on the website. These will be identical sessions, so you don’t need to attend both. For those who cannot attend in person, the December 10 event will have a dial-in number, but space is limited so be sure to register, even for the dial-in.
- And we have a rapid response team that will respond to email questions we receive. If you have a question, send it to racetothetop@ed.gov.

Just one caveat before we turn to questions – for competitive grants such as this one, we cannot provide applicants with individual technical assistance, and we can only answer technical, clarifying, and logistical questions. Don’t hesitate to ask whatever you’d like, but forgive us in advance if we cannot answer your question.

With that...I’ll be quiet and start listening. I know you have a lot of questions, and will certainly have even more over the coming weeks as you get deeper into the documents. Let’s take the first question now.