



November 30, 2009

Government, Private Sector Depending on States for Education Reform

After months of anticipation and lots of stakeholder input, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) [released](#) details on the Race to the Top Fund on November 12, 2009. Funded at \$4.3 billion, it is, to date, the largest discretionary program in ED's history. The program is open only to states, with a mandated 50 percent of awards going to local education agencies based on Title I allocations. The remaining 50 percent can be allocated to whatever educational priorities are proposed by the individual states. States will have the opportunity to apply during two rounds: January 19, 2010 or June 1, 2010. States receiving awards in the first round cannot apply again, as they will be fully funded.

The overarching goals of the Race to the Top Fund are to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform and implementing ambitious plans in the [four education reform areas described in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (ARRA). To qualify, states must have no legal barriers to linking student growth and achievement data to teachers and principals for the purposes of evaluation. They also must have ED's approval for their plans for both phases of the ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Fund prior to being awarded a grant. During the announcement of the competition, secretary Arne Duncan said, "we will award grants to the states that have led the way in reform and will show the way for the rest of the country to follow." ED has scheduled a technical assistance workshops for December, with the first scheduled for December 3, 2009 in Denver. The second workshop is tentatively set for December 10 in the Washington, DC area and GRC staff is planning to attend.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has announced that it will provide \$250,000 to any state that agrees to follow the foundation's approach to education reform while applying for Race to the Top Grants. There are eight criteria for accepting the foundation's support, which includes a commitment to a set of common academic standards to be adopted by every state and the ability to link student data to teachers. The foundation is also a proponent of paying teachers based on student test scores, among other measures of achievement, and charter schools that operate independently of local school boards. The [Associated Press](#) describes the state of Minnesota's adoption of the Gates approach.

Meanwhile, the Lumina Foundation has awarded \$9.1 million in grants to seven states (Arizona, Indiana, Maryland, Montana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas) that are making successful attempts to increase degree completion in ways that can be replicated in other parts of the country. The State Productivity Grant program is a product of the foundation's new [Making Opportunity Affordable](#) education initiative. The four-year grants require renewal each year based on states' progress toward meeting concrete goals.

As part of a "guide for policy makers" accompanying the grant announcement, the foundation identified four qualities contributing to the seven states' success: rewarding institutions that focus on students completing quality programs, not just attempting them; rewarding students for completing courses and degree or certificate programs; expanding and strengthening lower cost, nontraditional education options through modified regulations; and investing in institutions that demonstrate the results of adopting good business practices. The grants also tie into Lumina's [Goal 2025](#) project of increasing the number of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. See *Inside Higher Ed* for [additional coverage](#). - *Malcolm Furgol and Erika Thompson*

Juvenile Justice Reentry on the Hill, SAMHSA Accepting Applications

On November 16, 2009, the Youth Reentry Task Force of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition, along with the Sentencing Project and the National Alliance to End Homelessness, delivered a congressional briefing on juvenile justice reentry issues. Speakers discussed best practices for service providers, federal laws that support reentry services, studies of reentry services that reduce recidivism, and current perspectives from the field. The speakers also made recommendations on how to bolster national policy to better support juveniles' reentry needs and released a [research report](#) that outlines current findings on juvenile reentry issues.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is currently [accepting applications](#) for a related funding opportunity, the Offender Reentry Program. Awards supports projects to expand or enhance substance abuse treatment and related recovery and reentry services to sentenced juvenile and adult offenders returning to the community after incarceration. Applications are due by **January 19, 2009**.

NEH Summer Seminar Themes Announced

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Time Warner Takes up National STEM Priorities

As the Foundation Center [reports](#), Time Warner Cable has made a \$100 million, five-year commitment to improve science, technology, math, and science (STEM) education in the U.S. The initiative aims to build awareness of the need for better STEM education and to [connect](#) students to hands-on afterschool opportunities to experience STEM in non-traditional ways. Time Warner's announcement coincides with the White House's launch of the [Educate to Innovate](#) campaign "to move American students to the top of the pack in science and math achievement over the next decade."

New Site Provides Updates on Physical Science Funding

The Task Force on American Innovation has launched a new [website](#) to house information on federal policies and appropriations for key agencies that fund research in the physical sciences, engineering, and mathematics: the Department of Commerce National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Defense, Department of Energy Office of Science, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and National Science Foundation.

The task force says the website is intended to serve as a tool for policymakers, such as congressional staff and agency officials, as well as the news media, constituents of task force member organizations, and the general public. It will contain up-to-date information on appropriations for key agencies, relevant authorization legislation, press releases and news stories on federally funded research, links to science news, and information on the economic

The National Endowment for the Humanities has announced the topics for its 2010 summer seminars and institutes: British romanticism; interwar Shanghai and Berlin; contemporary Brazilian literature; Descartes, Galileo, and Hobbes; the American Civil War; autobiography: Perpetua and Augustine; Aristotle on truth; mapping and art in the Americas; the golden age of magazines; Rome in late antiquity; cultural and technical exchange between early modern Islam and Europe; philosophical perspectives on liberal democracy; teaching the history of political economy; history of the Silk Road; interactions between Native Americans and European colonists; medieval philosophy, history, and interfaith exchanges between Christians, Muslims, and Jews; American maritime history; native cultures of the Pacific Northwest; ritual and ceremony in Europe and the Americas.

Many of these seminars and institutes take place on American campuses, but some will be held at sites in Brazil, England, Italy, Spain, and Tunisia. New for this year, a select number of spaces in seminars and institutes are now reserved for full-time graduate students.

Applications to [participate](#) in a 2010 summer program are due by **March 2, 2010**, as are [proposals to direct a seminar or institute](#) in 2011.

Proposal Development Workshop Feb 25-27



The Grants Resource Center invites you to attend the 2010 GRC Proposal Development Workshop. The agenda offers the opportunity to gather information on FY 10 and FY 11 priority programs across the federal government and in the private sector, to advance your institution's undergraduate research agenda, and to

participate in interactive workshops on the development and review of grant proposals during sessions like these:

- Proposal writing workshops and agency updates from the National Institutes of Health and the National Endowment for the Humanities
- Sessions led by National Science Foundation program directors, reviewers, and applicants on effective project evaluation and on the revision of declined proposals
- A workshop on the responsible conduct of research at the predominantly-undergraduate institution
- Additional presentations by agency representatives and awardees from the Administration for Children and Families, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of State.

To maximize the value of attendees' travel time, a wide selection of agency representatives will be on-site and available for individual meetings throughout the conference. A special event hosted by GRC and the Council on Undergraduate Research will afford an exciting opportunity to network with the senior leadership of federal grantmaking agencies and national foundations and to share information with them about the research and sponsored programs activity underway on your campus.

The working agenda is available [online](#) and register beginning November 23, 2009. We look forward to seeing you in February.

and other impacts of basic research in the physical sciences.

Reports to Read Now

- U.S. Department of Education American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Report: **Summary of Programs and State-by-State Data**
- **Making the Numbers Add Up:** A Guide for Using Data in College Access and Success Programs - This Lumina Foundation for Education report discusses the role of data collection in building partnerships and improving outcomes of college preparation programs for underrepresented students.
- **2009 Grantee Perception Report** by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- **State Agency Research and Development Expenditures: Fiscal Year 2007**



Reminder: MRI Web Conference

Randy Phelps, director of the NSF's Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) program, will lead a web conference for GRC members on December 17, 2009, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern. Funding for MRI in FY 10 is

uncertain. If a competition takes place, a new solicitation will be posted and a closing date would likely occur in early-2010. Phelps will provide an update on the program's status and discuss characteristics of successful MRI proposals in anticipation of future MRI competitions. The fee registration fee of \$120 includes two connections to maximize participation on your campus. **Register**

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