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Subject: U.S. Department of Education *First in the World Development Grant and Validation Grant Opportunities*

Date: May 15, 2015

The U.S. Department of Education has posted two types of opportunities for funding under its *First in the World Program—the Development Grant and the Validation Grant*. USDE will fund only one submission from each institution, *either* a Development Grant *or* a Validation Grant. The FITW program is designed to support the development, replication, and dissemination of innovative solutions and evidence for what works in addressing persistent and widespread challenges in postsecondary education for students who are at risk for not persisting in and completing postsecondary programs, including, but not limited to, adult learners, working students, part-time students, students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, students with disabilities, and first-generation students. The focus of the FITW program is to build evidence for what works in postsecondary education by testing the effectiveness of these strategies in improving student persistence and completion outcomes.

Development grants will support new or substantially more effective practices for addressing widely shared challenges. Applications for Development grants must be based on Strong Theory.

The *FITW Development Grant* priorities include:

- Improving Teaching and Learning
- Developing and Using Assessments of Learning – Alternative assessment tools, aligning assessments across sectors.
- Facilitating Pathways to Credentialing and Transfer
- Implementing Low Cost- High Impact Strategies to Improve Student Outcomes.

Awards for Development Grants are for 48 months, with a maximum of \$3 million, average of \$2 million.

Validation grants provide funding to support the expansion and replication of projects supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness to a scaled multi-site sample, which would include multiple institutions of higher education, including multiple institutions within a State system.

The *FITW Validation Grant* priorities include:

- Improving Success in Developmental Education
- Improving Teaching and Learning
- Improving Student Support Services
- Influencing the Development of Non-Cognitive Factors

Awards for Validation Grants are for 48 months, with a maximum of \$10 million, average of \$7 million.

Additional information on both types of funding can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fitw/applicant.html>. The deadline for full proposals to the U.S. Department of Education *First in the World Program* is Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

This is a limited competition; each institution may submit only one application (Development or Validation) in the 2015 FITW program. Please submit your 3-page preproposal (plus budget and CV; all documents in a SINGLE PDF file, 11 point font) by NOON on Wednesday, May 27, 2015 to limited@unm.edu with the subject line indicating *either* FITW-Development – your name, *OR* FITW-Validation – your name. The preproposal will be evaluated based on the following: describe your program and its match with one of the two types of USDofEd's *First in the World program* priorities; impact of the program; and innovations that improve outcomes for high-need

students: designed to improve one or more of the following outcomes: persistence, academic progress, time to degree, completion. The narrative should be accompanied by a **draft budget overview** and an **abbreviated PI CV**. The scoring will be weighted as follows: proposal narrative (70%), draft budget overview (15%), and abbreviated PI CV (15%).

No late submissions will be considered. Should you have any questions about the Limited Competition process please feel free to contact Monica Fishel (mlfishel@unm.edu).

If you are affiliated with HSC, please contact Corey Ford at 272-6950 for more information.