

# Seven states split third round of Race to the Top funds

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Today, the Department of Education (DOE) **awarded** federal **Race to the Top** (RTTT) funds to the tune of \$200 million split among seven states. This is the third round of awards for the \$4 billion program aimed at revitalizing America's K-12 education system through reform and innovation. The latest batch of winners includes:

- Arizona - \$25.1 million
- Colorado - \$17.9 million
- Illinois - \$42.8 million
- Kentucky - \$17 million
- Louisiana - \$17.5 million
- Pennsylvania - \$41.3 million
- New Jersey - \$37.9 million

The seven states were all finalists in last year's competition, in which 12 states split \$3.4 billion. Nine runners-up were eligible to compete, but South Carolina opted out, and California's application was deemed incomplete.

While this round's \$200 million is a steep drop from last year's \$3.4 billion in distributed funds, the Department of Education hopes states will still pursue many of their original **initiatives** such as raising academic standards/scores; improving teacher-evaluation systems; and boosting science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) instruction. Top priorities for the newly-awarded states include:

**Arizona:** The state's education reform plan, "**Arizona Ready**," includes the establishment of five regional education centers with coordinators and content specialists hired to oversee operations; transitioning to Common Core State Standards (CCSS); and improving data systems. The state will also pursue IT initiatives to support course mapping and student-teacher-data link processes.

**Colorado:** The state recently established a Race to the Top office to assist in overseeing education reform, which will include transitioning to college- and career-ready standards; improving educator effectiveness; advancing STEM education; and adopting a new educator evaluation system (Deltek Opportunity [65254](#)).

**Illinois:** The state is heavily focused on building local educational agencies' (LEAs) capacity, and will create a Race to the Top Leadership and Implementation team as well as a Center for School Improvement. The state also plans to revamp performance reporting (Deltek Opportunity [57345](#)), create P-20 STEM programs of study with STEM learning exchanges (Deltek Opportunity [64745](#)), and produce LEA assessment systems (Deltek Opportunity [57354](#)).

**Kentucky:** The state will invest in its Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (**CIITS**), which is described as a "one-stop shop" technology support system for state educators. Funds will be utilized to employ various components of the CIITS, including an educator development suite to rank educator effectiveness scores, and a formative assessment system.

**Louisiana:** The state intends to expand its instructional improvement system, Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE), and implement a comprehensive performance management system to measure educator success.

**New Jersey:** The state plans to develop an instructional improvement system along with instructional support tools and model curricula. Other goals include piloting a principal evaluation system and employing a new teacher evaluation system throughout the state.

**Pennsylvania:** The state aims to increase access to online coursework and enhance its online educator resource portal. Two Web-based initiatives are also in the works: a public school performance report card to highlight academic achievement and economic standing, and an educator dashboard with classroom data. Additional goals include offering professional development opportunities for educators, overhauling teacher and principal evaluation systems, and improving charter school communication and technical assistance strategies.

In total, 21 states and the District of Columbia have received RTTT awards, with more to come. The 2012 omnibus bill that Congress **passed** last night authorizes \$550 million for the continuation of the program, and also expands eligible applicants to local education agencies.

Though funds are diminishing and most states have delayed RTTT implementation efforts, the DOE is still determined to ensure the program's success, even if it means revoking awarded funds from underperforming states.

On Wednesday, the department sent Hawaii, a round-two winner, a **letter** notifying the state it has been placed on "high-risk status" for inadequate progress in carrying out its RTTT goals. A year ago, Deltek reported on Hawaii's **big plans** for utilizing its \$75 million award to reform education – plans of which have apparently fallen short. The DOE has restricted the state's remaining funds and will conduct an on-site review early next year to determine whether to withdraw the award altogether. Subsequently, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced Thursday that the DOE plans to release state RTT progress report cards over the next month.

