



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



August 29, 2016

Mary Anne Snyder  
Director, Office of Early Childhood  
Colorado Department of Human Services  
1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Snyder:

This letter is in response to Colorado's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments) approved Colorado's grant projects and scope of work on September 8, 2014. On April 29, 2016, Colorado's Office of Early Childhood submitted an amendment request to its Project Officers indicating the grantee would like to extend its grant period by one year by reallocating unspent funds in the amount of \$8,345,799.00 from its Year 4 budget to Year 5.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On March 3, 2015, the Departments issued "Amendment Requests with No-Cost Extension Guidance and Principles" indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its RTT-ELC application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions. In reviewing this request, project officers considered the State's explanation and plan for how the work will be sustained (or, if appropriate, completed) after the timeframe of the no-cost extension

Based on the documentation submitted, Colorado has fulfilled the conditions specified. Under the approved amendment, the State will complete the implementation of the RTT-ELC grant by December 31, 2017. None of the changes proposed in this amendment change the scope or objectives of the grant.

The following projects will move funds into a fifth year of the grant:

Project 1 (Grants Management and Administration): Colorado is requesting approval to extend Project 1 in order to oversee the other projects to be extended, and to complete the administrative requirements of the grant. These staff will transition to long-term funding and their ongoing roles within the Office of Early Childhood will support the continuation of grant work around governance and communications beyond the RTT-ELC grant. To complete these activities, Colorado will extend up to \$132,000.00 for obligation by December 31, 2017.

Project 3 (Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)): Colorado is requesting approval to extend Project 3 in order to support professional development on Colorado Shines QRIS and make a one-time system upgrade to ColoradoPEAK.gov website to add 12 programs. Additionally, Colorado proposed extending the Colorado Shines

QRIS system validation into 2017 to allow a larger sample size to support a more statistically significant study. To complete these activities, Colorado will extend up to \$5,363,975.00 for obligation by December 31, 2017.

Project 4 (Early Childhood Professional Development): Colorado is requesting approval to extend Project 4 to build capacity across the state for the delivery of Colorado's Early Childhood Competencies trainings and increase access to demonstrated competencies tools. Colorado plans to complete a one-time expansion and enhancement within Professional Development Information System functionality to improve the usefulness and increase the benefits for system users. In collaboration with TEACH Scholarships and the Foundation for Colorado's Community Colleges proposes to extend scholarships for early childhood workforce members through the end of grant. Finally, Colorado recently began requiring the Colorado Coaching Credential and proposes to extend the time for implementation to enable Colorado to increase local capacity to provide these supports. To complete these activities, Colorado will extend up to \$1,584,605.00 for obligation by December 31, 2017.

Project 5 (Results Matter Expansion): Colorado is requesting approval to extend Project 5 for field-based technical assistance of Teaching Strategies Gold in family home settings and community based child care settings. Additionally, Colorado proposes to provide training materials and supports for improving the quality of child observations and the use of data to improve practices in early childhood settings. To complete these activities, Colorado will extend up to \$560,504.00 for obligation by December 31, 2017.

Project 6 (Kindergarten Entry Assessments): Colorado is requesting approval to extend Project 6 for the following priorities: 1) Technical Assistance to school districts; 2) Distribution of funds to local districts to purchase assessments and supports; and 3) P-3 Leadership Cadre and 4) Statewide School Readiness Reporting. To complete these activities, Colorado will extend up to \$704,715.00 for obligation by December 31, 2017.

Colorado proposes to continue supporting local districts by strengthening teachers' ability to create responsive learning environments, and by supporting coaching on implementation of assessments and the use of data in the learning cycle. Colorado proposes to continue distribution of funds for student portfolios and school readiness assessments. Colorado proposes the P-3 Leadership Cadre, made up of principal lead teams from elementary schools, continue building district level capacity in the use of school readiness assessments to plan and individualize instruction as part of a P-3 system.

The Departments approve Colorado's request to obligate funds through December 31, 2017 for the purposes described in this letter. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects.

It is our understanding that this amendment request will not change Colorado's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure that Colorado can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities. Please note that we expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by March 31, 2018, given that by law all RTT-ELC funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2018. This will require the State to closely monitor their use of funds to ensure that funds are spent within the no-cost extension period. This letter will be posted to ED's website as a record of the amendments.

We are confident that Colorado will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Miriam Lund, at (202) 401-2871 or [Miriam.Lund@ed.gov](mailto:Miriam.Lund@ed.gov) or your co-project officer, Karen Knoll-

Moran, at (303) 844-1164 or [Karen.Knoll-Moran@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Karen.Knoll-Moran@acf.hhs.gov). We are confident that Colorado will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning.

Sincerely,

/s/

Libby Doggett  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of Early Learning  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education

/s/

Linda K. Smith  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood  
Development  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services