



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



June 30, 2016

Ms. L. Kelley Washington
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
160 N LaSalle St, Suite N-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Ms. Washington,

This letter is in response to Illinois' request to amend its approved Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. On April 22, 2016, the Illinois' Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development submitted a budget amendment request for funds to be moved within and across all 13 grant projects.

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. Based on the documentation submitted, Illinois has fulfilled the conditions required for the program officers to approve the requested budget amendment. None of the changes proposed in this amendment change the scope or objectives of the grant.

The budget amendment is approved as described below:

The State has the Departments' approval to move a total of \$4,450,694.69 of unspent funds from its Year 3 budget to Year 4. Specifically, Illinois may transfer \$3,770,151.69 of unspent funds within Projects 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 between budget lines and fiscal years to support activities and tasks associated with the RTT-ELC scope of work. Illinois may transfer \$680,543 across projects as follows:

\$ 363,692.00	Transferred funds from Project 1, 10, and 11 into Project 3
\$ 198,523.00	Transferred funds from Project 10 into Project 4
\$ 425.00	Transferred funds from Project 11 into Project 6
\$ 87,750.00	Transferred funds from Project 1 into Project 7
\$ 30,000.00	Transferred funds from Project 1, 10, and 11 into Project 8
\$ 153.00	Transferred funds from Project 11 into Project 9

The description of Illinois' continued project work is as follows:

Project 1 (Grant Management): Illinois Grant Management project will continue to support core functions of grant administration, contract monitoring, and cross-agency coordination within the functional areas of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)-ExceleRate Illinois, workforce, data, and community systems development.

Project 2 (Core-Infrastructure for QRIS): Project 2 will continue and complete implementation of infrastructure components needed to support ongoing processing of QRIS ratings and support systems, capacity building of systems at the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) for processing QRIS applications and review and revision of QRIS criteria.

Project 3 (Core Supports for Quality Improvement): Illinois will complete quality improvement activities by continuing to execute technical assistance training for centers and family child care homes by Quality Specialists, provide one-time bonuses to participating providers, and support for ExceleRate Illinois Awards of Excellence.

Project 4 (Core Infrastructure for QRIS Assessments): The QRIS Assessor will complete their work related to the external assessment of programs in the State's QRIS (ExceleRate Illinois). The QRIS Assessor will assess Head Start school-based programs, collect and analyze the data and assist the State in determining if their key performance metrics were met.

Project 5 (Public Awareness): Illinois will provide outreach to parents and providers through a public awareness and marketing campaign for ExceleRate Illinois.

Project 6 (Evaluation of QRIS): The validation study of Illinois' ExceleRate Illinois requires data collection and analysis from multiple data systems and a multi-party data share agreement. Participating State Agencies are requiring additional security assurances for its data. Illinois is working to complete the work associated with the validation study.

Project 7 (Community Systems): Illinois will support a second cohort of ten communities participating in the ABLe Change Framework allowing the communities to complete their training in order to facilitate the implementation of local system change.

Project 8 (Gateways Registry): Illinois is working to process 12,500 Gateways Registry credential applications. The number of applications requires additional time to complete processing. The Illinois RTT-ELC is working to have all centers and family child care homes apply for credentials; applicants will then receive credentials, from the Gateways Registry, based on the requirements met for coursework/experience.

Project 9 (Professional Development): Illinois is piloting a Technical Assistance and a Family Specialist credential aligned to institutes of higher education course work. Illinois is working to ensure the pilots have adequate resources for individuals working on these credentials to complete their coursework and for the evaluators to assess and analyze the collected data.

Project 10 (Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)): Illinois will collect standardized data of children entering kindergarten statewide and Illinois State Board of Education will make adjustments to the instrument and facilitate a streamlined data collection effort.

Project 11 (Data Projects): Illinois will create common identifiers for children participating in Head Start programs; build out enhancements for a Data Tracking program; continue matching children within the Illinois Longitudinal Data System; create variables and linkages in the teacher data project; include data from the day care licensing system and complete Chicago Public Schools' data clean up.

Project 12 (Multi-State Partnership): Illinois is working with a consortium of states to complete development and piloting of a multi-state instrument to assess program quality within a quality rating and improvement system.

Project 13 (Targeted High Need Communities): Illinois will coordinate an intake system, develop scale-up opportunities, complete sustainability planning and complete a final report noting lessons learned and what is sustainable from the work that took place in Targeted High Need Communities.

It is our understanding that this amendment request will not change Illinois' overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure that Illinois can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities. This letter will be posted to ED's website as a record of the amendments.

We are confident that Illinois 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 or your co-project officer Maria Pestalardo, at (312) 353-4158 or Maria.Pestalardo@acf.hhs.gov.

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