



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



October 7, 2015

Bobbie Burnham
Director, Minnesota Office of Early Learning
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Burnham:

This letter is in response to Minnesota's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On August 12th and August 24th, 2015, Minnesota requested that three of its twelve approved projects (Project 4: Early Learning Standards, Project 6: Workforce Framework, Project 7: Great Workforce Supports, and Project 12: Project Management) be granted a 12 month no-cost extension and that Project 11: Private Public Partnership be granted a 6-month extension.

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, Minnesota has fulfilled the conditions specified. Under the approved amendment, Minnesota will continue to implement its Early Learning Standards, Workforce Framework, Great Workforce Supports, and Project Management projects through December 31, 2016 and its Private Public Partnership project through June 30, 2016.

The following no-cost extension amendment for the above projects are approved, as described below:

- Project 4 (Early Learning Standards): The request for Project 4 includes work that was approved in the original plan but will not be completed by December 30, 2015. Approval of the request will allow Minnesota to include revisions of its standards and the creation of support materials. These revisions will allow Minnesota to develop methods of increasing access to its Early Learning Standards, a required activity which was approved in the State's recent budget amendment. All activities for which the extension is requested are within the Minnesota's

existing Scope of Work. The activities will improve access to the Early Learning Standards, improve support documents on the Early Learning indicators and help with timely completion of required activities. Minnesota will spend up to \$383,155.96 for contracts, training stipends, and indirect costs.

- Project 6 (Workforce Framework Project): The Workforce Framework establishes the integrated Board of Teaching Standards and Core Competencies as the shared framework for professional development in Minnesota. Work has begun to ensure the Framework is the foundation of all professional development delivery systems. However, barriers have been identified since the RTT-ELC grant was written. The no-cost extension will allow Minnesota to address those barriers and continue to work toward acceptance of the revised competencies by Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and the early childhood community. The no-cost extension will also allow Minnesota to create a set of cross sector professional learning standards that ensures the Knowledge and Competency Framework serves as the foundation and supports professional development delivery systems. Minnesota will spend up to \$404,057.77 for salary, fringe, and travel.
- Project 7 (GreatWorkforce Supports): Minnesota has requested a no-cost extension for an additional six months of time to carry forward funds for Project 7. Minnesota has developed new and adapted existing training curricula aligned with their revised Knowledge and Competency Framework. Minnesota has also enhanced its Parent Aware TQRIS by offering significant resources to Early Childhood Educators to access training and education. The no-cost extension for Project 7 will allow grant activities to be effectively implemented and continue progress towards identified performance targets for this project. The impact of the so-cost extension will allow Minnesota to make further progress towards its Great Workforce performance measures and increase the numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators advancing on Minnesota's Career Lattice. Minnesota will spend up to \$1,082,278 for contracting costs.
- Project 11: Encouraging Private Sector Support: Minnesota's no-cost extension request for this project will allow Minnesota to provide new tools for foundations, businesses and non-profits for Greater Minnesota communities to foster public-private partnerships that promote quality child care and early education programs. The no-cost extension will specifically allow Minnesota more time for activities that began in year four of the RTT-ELC and to complete specific deliverables detailed in our Scope of Work, including allowing more time for Minnesota's contractor to work across the public and private sectors in identified communities to provide technical assistance and document collaborations. Minnesota will spend up to \$50,000 for contracting costs.
- Project 12: Project Management: Minnesota's no-cost extension for Project 12 will ensure proper management and oversight of grant related activities in all projects that receive no-cost extensions. Minnesota will spend up to \$374,756.49 for salary, fringe, travel, supplies, grants and indirect costs.

The Departments approve Minnesota's request to obligate funds through December 31, 2016 for the purposes described in this letter for Projects 4, 6, 7, and 12 and through June 30, 2016 for Project 11. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects, should other requests be needed.

It is our understanding that this amendment request will not change Minnesota's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Minnesota can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities. The Departments expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by March 31, 2017, given that by law all RTT-ELC funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2017. This letter will be posted to ED's website as a record of the amendments.

If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Brenda Wilkins, at (202) 245-6920 or Brenda.Wilkins@ed.gov or your co-project officer Michael Mencarini, at (312) 886-3378 or michael.mencarini@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

cc: Bobbie Burnham, Director, Minnesota Office of Early Learning
Lisa Barnidge, RTT-ELC Project Manager