



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



May 9, 2016

Lucy Roberts
Early Childhood Policy Advisor
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Ms. Roberts:

This letter is in response to North Carolina's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education approved North Carolina grant projects and scope of work on November 12, 2012. On April 12, 2016, North Carolina submitted a budget amendment request, whereby it proposes to reallocate unspent funds from Year 4 of the grant into its no-cost extension year.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments 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.

On April 12, 2016, the NC Department of Health and Human Services sent an amendment request to its Project Officers indicating the grantee would like to reallocate unspent funds in the amount of \$13,477,291 from its Year 4 budget to Year 5. NC is also requesting to extend grant activities for Projects 9 and 14 until December 31, 2016, in addition to the other projects that already have an approved no cost extension. None of the changes proposed in this amendment change the scope or objectives of the grant. For most of these projects, unspent funds are moving into Year 5 for the same purpose.

The following amendment is approved, as described below:

Project 1 (Grant Management and Implementation Support): NC is requesting approval to carry forward a total of \$3,087,497 from Year 4 to Year 5, to support overall grant management activities, including communications strategies, the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council, and an initiative to determine the amount of funds that NC invests in young children. These funds will also provide implementation support for the Transformation Zone initiative, including an evaluation and final report.

Project 2 (NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$5,241,406 from Year 4 to Year 5, without any changes to the approved scope of work. Funding will support the WORKS project, which is developing a child care workforce data system.

Project 3 (Professional Development Capacity Building): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$136,846 from Year 4 to Year 5, without any changes to the approved scope of work, to continue to support the online master's degree programs in early childhood leadership and administration.

Project 4 (Promoting Participation in TQRIS): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$674,686, without any changes to the approved scope of work. This project supports the Professional Development Bonus Awards. This amendment would move \$154,000 to Project 5 and \$63,340 to Project 8.

Project 5 (New TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$792,021 from Year 4 to Year 5, without any changes to the approved scope of work. Funds will continue to support the development of a new program quality measurement tool. Additional funding of \$154,000 from Project 4 will provide the funds needed for the increased project timeline.

Project 6 (Increasing Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$1,612,198 from Year 4 to Year 5, to support the infant toddler care activities in the Transformation Zones and personnel and temporary staff support. Infant and Toddler CLASS training will be extended through the no cost extension year. This amendment will also move \$500,000 to Project 8 and \$116,340 to Project 9.

Project 7 (TQRIS Validation Study): NC is requesting to carry forward \$1,942,294 from Year 4 to Year 5, with no changes to the approved scope of work. This project supports a contract for the TQRIS Validation Study. This amendment will also move \$125,000 to Project 9.

Project 8 (Enhanced Professional Development): NC is requesting to carry forward \$1,142,004 from Year 4 to Year 5, and to add funds from Project 4 (\$63,340) and Project 6 (\$500,000). Funds will support the development and maintenance of an online learning management system and enhanced technical assistance and professional development for providers. Funds will also support the implementation of a new Institute on Healthy Social Behavior/Pyramid Model.

Project 9 (Early Learning and Development Standards): NC is requesting to carry forward \$144,159 from Year 4 to Year 5, and to add funds from Project 6 (\$116,340), Project 7 (\$125,000), Project 12 (\$100,000) and Project 13 (\$104,500). Project 9 was not included in NC's previously approved no-cost extension request. The extension will allow time to enhance and complete the advanced level online training on NC's revised early learning and development standards.

Project 10 (Certification and Licensure): NC is requesting to carry forward \$324,645 from Year 4 to Year 5, with no changes to the approved scope of work, to support early childhood teachers receiving coaching, mentoring, and evaluation services to earn or maintain the NC Birth-through-Kindergarten license.

Project 11 (Access and Accreditation): NC is requesting to carry forward \$69,767 from Year 4 to Year 5 for closeout purposes. This project is completed.

Project 12 (Compensation and Retention): NC is requesting to carry forward \$1,577,838 from Year 4 to Year 5, with no changes in the approved scope of work, to support compensation supplements for teachers in the Transformation Zones and TEACH scholarships for students in the online master's programs. This amendment will also move \$100,000 to Project 9.

Project 13 (Cultural Competence): NC is requesting to carry forward \$194,216 from Year 4 to Year 5 for closeout purposes. This project is completed. This amendment will also move \$50,000 to Project 14 and \$104,500 to Project 9.

Project 14 (Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute): NC is requesting to carry forward \$133,211 from Year 4 to Year 5. In addition, \$50,000 will be reallocated from Project 13. Project 14 was not included in NC's previously approved no-cost extension request. The extension will allow time to promote the sustainability of leadership development curriculum content from the Institute, by adapting materials into two training modules, delivering train-the-trainer and online modules, and providing training on the Program Administration Scale (PAS) and the Business Administration Scale (BAS).

Project 15 (K-3 Assessment): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$4,831,291 from Year 4 to Year 5, without any changes to the approved scope of work, to support the development and implementation of a K-3 Formative Assessment, including a kindergarten entry assessment.

Project 16 (Family Engagement): NC is requesting to carry forward \$462,966 from Year 4 to Year 5 for closeout purposes. This project is completed.

Project 17 (Family Strengthening): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$2,557,942 from Year 4 to Year 5, without any changes to the approved scope of work, to support nurse home visiting in the Transformation Zone and the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) in the Transformation Zone and surrounding high-need counties in northeastern NC.

Project 18 (Partnership Initiatives): NC is requesting approval to carry forward \$3,227,705 from Year 4 to Year 5, without any changes to the approved scope of work, to support Partnership Initiatives, specifically Transformation Zone Implementation Support, Transformation Zone Early Literacy Projects, Child Care Health Consultation, and the Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) program.

It is our understanding that this amendment request will not change the State's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure that the State 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, 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. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS 360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov or your co-project officer LaPrayshia Hayes, at (404) 562-0563 or LaPrayshia.Hayes@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