



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



June 10, 2015

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, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On May 4, 2015, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services sent 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 \$15,888,580 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, North Carolina has fulfilled the conditions specified. Under the approved amendment, the State will complete the implementation of the RTT-ELC grant by December 31, 2016. None of the changes proposed in this amendment change the scope or objectives of the grant.

The following no-cost extension amendment is approved, as described below:

Project 1 (Grant Management and Implementation Support): NC will spend up to \$2,174,345 in Year 5 of the grant in order to: 1) ensure continuous quality grants management until the end of the grant; 2) ensure continuous implementation support for the Transformation Zone counties; 3) complete the Transformation Zone evaluation; and 4) support the technical assistance needs of NC's RTT-ELC projects.

Project 2 (NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System): NC will spend up to \$3,562,244 in Year 5 in order to: 1) complete the building of the NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System; 2) facilitate and strengthen the newly developed outcomes data reporting from the local Smart Start

partnerships; and 3) ensure adequate testing, training, and marketing around the new Child Care Workforce Registry system.

Project 3 (Professional Development Capacity Building): NC will spend up to \$108,638 in Year 5 for the purpose of completing the implementation of the online Master's Degree for Early Childhood Leadership and Administration at two universities.

Project 4 (Promoting Participation in TQRIS): NC will spend up to \$257,864 in Year 5 for the purpose of extending incentives to improve the work environment. This will extend the contract to provide the Professional Development Bonus Program until December 2016 or until funds are depleted.

Project 5 (New TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development): NC will spend up to \$427,262 in Year 5 for the purpose of extending the contract with UNC-Greensboro for the development of a new program quality measurement tool for use in a TQRIS. Additional funds will support an expansion of pilot testing, more in-depth data and report writing, and training protocol development after data collection is complete.

Project 6 (Increasing Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs): NC will spend up to \$1,000,000 in Year 5 for the purpose of supporting personnel and temporary staff and to extend the timeline for implementation of part-day infant-toddler programs in the Transformation Zone.

Project 7 (TQRIS Validation Study): NC will spend up to \$300,000 in Year 5 for the purpose of extending the contract for the TQRIS Validation Study through September 30, 2016.

Project 8 (Enhanced Professional Development): NC will spend up to \$500,000 in Year 5 for the purpose of maintaining an online learning management system to host online training.

Project 10 (Certification and Licensure): NC will spend up to \$200,000 in Year 5 for the purpose of extending two contracts that support the Birth – Kindergarten Teacher Licensure Project. These funds will support the sustainability of mentoring and evaluation services for early childhood teachers employed by nonpublic community programs and enrolled in the Teacher Licensure Project.

Project 12 (Compensation and Retention): NC will spend up to \$873,478 in Year 5 to extend its contract with Child Care Services Association to provide one additional WAGES incentive payment to the approximately 120 eligible child care teachers in the four Transformation Zone counties, and to support students with TEACH Scholarships through the fall semester of 2016 enrolled in the On-Line Master's Degree.

Project 15 (K-3 Assessment): NC will spend up to \$3,084,065 in Year 5 for the purpose of completing the implementation of the K-3 Formative Assessment, with implementation statewide by December 2016. The extension will support the continuation of staff to provide the technical assistance and coaching to ensure sustainability. It will also support Regional

Implementation Teams working with District Implementation Teams to deliver professional development, coaching, and sustainability.

Project 17 (Family Strengthening): NC will spend up to \$1,906,971 in Year 5 for the purpose of extending two activities, Family Strengthening and Family Connects. Family Strengthening, or the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), provides parents with practical strategies to help them manage children's behavior and build healthy relationships. Family Connects is an evidence-based newborn nurse home visiting program which is being implemented in the four Transformation Zone counties.

Project 18 (Partnership Initiatives): NC will spend up to \$1,493,713 in Year 5 for the purpose of extending the contract with the North Carolina Partnership for Children through December 31, 2016. This contract supports the following activities: 1) the Leaders Collaborative; 2) the Transformation Zone Implementation Team; 3) Transformation Zone early literacy services; 4) child care health consultation; and 5) Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD).

The Departments approve North Carolina's request to obligate funds through December 31, 2016 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 North Carolina's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure that North Carolina 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.

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,



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



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