



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



August 15, 2016

Wendy Grove
Director, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness
Ohio Department of Education
25 South Front Street, Mail Stop 208
Columbus, OH 43215-4183

Angel Rhodes
Early Education and Development Officer
Office of Ohio Governor John R. Kasich
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Dr. Grove and Dr. Rhodes:

This letter is in response to Ohio's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments) approved Ohio's scope of work on July 3, 2012. On June 20, 2016, Ohio requested an amendment to their budget to move unspent funds to Projects 1 and 11.

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.

The following amendment request is approved, as described below:

The State has undertaken a review of expenditures as it moves to the end of its No Cost Extension period, and proposes to move \$1,891,650 of unspent funds from various projects to allow timely completion of work in Project 1 and Project 11. Ohio will obligate all funds by Dec. 31, 2016.

Funds would be moved into:

Project 1 (Grants Management): To continue support for the Program Manager position (at Ohio Department of Education, ODE), develop the Family and Community Engagement Pilot, and finish facilitation of JRS (an early childhood advisory council of the governor's office), Ohio

will move unspent funds from the “Personnel” line of the Project 1 budget as well as \$37,681 of unspent funds from other projects into the “Contractual” line of Project 1.

Project 11 (Re-engineer SUTQ and Licensing Database): To finish development of the Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS), Ohio will move \$1,853,969 of unspent funds from other projects to the “Personnel”, “Fringe Benefits”, “Indirect Costs” and “Contractual” lines of the budget. OCLQS is a single database, used by State staff and the public, that joins together licensing and Step Up to Quality (SUTQ, Ohio’s tiered quality rating and improvement system) functionalities. In August, 2015, OCLQS underwent a significant change of leadership and vendor. This change has been effective in reinvigorating the work and getting the project back on track. But the change caused a delay that means a compressed timeline, and this amendment will allow the State to complete OCLQS-related tasks in the scope of work by the end of the grant period.

Funds will be moved from:

Project 2 (External Validation and Consumer Education): Ohio will move \$221,057 from this project. These funds are unspent and able to be moved because the SUTQ Validation Study was awarded later in the grant period, so the original budgeted amount was higher than needed given the Study’s compressed schedule.

Project 3 (Increase Access to High Quality Programs): Ohio will move \$166,708 from this project. These unspent funds come from a couple areas — \$25,000 from a video enhancement of the Ohio Classroom Observation Tool the State has decided not to pursue; and some \$141,708 from savings in the “Contractual” line.

Project 4 (Maryland Collaboration on a Comprehensive Assessment System): Ohio will move \$501,222 from this project. These unspent funds come from a few areas — \$27,622 that is not needed for staffing; \$139,000 that was budgeted for the contract with partner State Maryland but that is not needed; \$300,000 in cost reduction for the Learning Management System since ODE was able to identify a company already working on another project which could be customized (rather than requiring a complete system build); and \$34,600 budgeted but not needed for rent, telecommunications, and other operational costs.

Project 6 (Professional Development Coordination): Ohio will move \$270,219 from this project. These unspent funds come from a few areas — \$52,409 from “Personnel” and “Fringe Benefits” because an administrative professional position was vacant for a number of months in a previous grant year; \$4,576 unspent in “Equipment” and “Supplies”; \$3,805 unspent in “Travel”; \$98,419 budgeted but not needed in “Funds for Localities”; \$23,067 unspent in “Other” since the English Language Learners Advisory Workgroup has completed their work and is no longer in need of facilitation or meeting funds; and some \$87,943 in “Contractual” funding should have been charged to ODE General Resource Fund instead of the grant, and will be credited back and available for the State to move to support Project 11.

Project 7 (Measures of Quality): Ohio will move \$122,179 from this project. These unspent funds come from a couple areas — \$118,000 in “Contractual” funding since this project is completed and contract staff is no longer needed; \$4,179 in unspent funds in the “Travel”, “Supplies”, and “Indirect Costs” lines.

Project 9 (Align Ohio CKC): Ohio will move \$30,000 in unspent funds from this project. These unspent funds come from savings from not needing to developing additional companion documents for Ohio’s Core Knowledge and Competencies.

Project 10 (Child Link): Ohio will move \$151,936 from this project. These unspent funds come from not needing to re-hire Project Manager and Business Analyst positions at the end of the grant period.

Project 12 (Child Assessment System): Ohio will move \$428,329 from this project. These unspent funds come from the fact that grant-funded work for the Child Assessment System has been completed, and continuation activities have been absorbed by the State's Office of Information Systems within Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS).

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Ohio’s RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure the State can continue to make progress on and finish its RTT-ELC scope of work activities.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education’s website as a record of the amendment request and our approval. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

We are confident that Ohio 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 U.S. Department of Education Project Officer, Katie Chase, at (202) 205-0266 or katie.chase@ed.gov or your U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Project Officer, Gena L. Miller, at gmliller@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