



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



June 11, 2015

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
State of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

This letter is in response to Washington State'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 April 30, 2015, Washington State requested that two of its five approved projects (TQRIS Expansion and TQRIS Infrastructure) be granted a 12 month no-cost extension. Together these two projects make up the State's tiered quality rating system (TQRIS) and the system supports that enable the sustainable expansion and maintenance of TQRIS across the state.

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.

Based on the documentation submitted, Washington State has fulfilled the conditions specified. Under the approved amendment, the State's quality rating system, Early Achievers (EA), will implement activities in the TQRIS Expansion and TQRIS Infrastructure projects through December 31, 2016.

The following no-cost extension amendment for both the TQRIS Expansion and TQRIS Infrastructure projects are approved, as described below:

- TQRIS Expansion is the foundational project of WA State's RTT-ELC Grant. It encompasses the following activities: Ratings and Monitoring, Coaching, Level 2 Technical Assistance, Level 2 Training and Rating Readiness, Program Evaluation, Scholarships and Training Reimbursement, Opportunity Awards, Quality Improvement Awards and ECEAP/ HS Incentives. These activities represent the work done in the field to establish and expand a statewide quality rating system. As of December 2014, TQRIS Expansion activities made up \$22.5M, or 71%, of the \$31.7M in RTT federal dollar expenditures. Washington State's Department of Early Learning (DEL) will use \$2.6M allocated to TQRIS Expansion as bridge funds between the end of the RTT-ELC federal funding and General State Fund dollars.

- TQRIS Infrastructure encompasses the following activities: Community Engagement, Data Analysis, Information and Material Dissemination and IT Technical Assistance. Together these activities provide the community outreach/ awareness and the data and financial analysis necessary for the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to expand and maintain EA across the state in a sustainable manner. As of December 2014, TQRIS Infrastructure Activities made up \$4M, or 13%, of the \$31.7M in RTT federal dollar expenditures. During the no-cost extension \$1.3M will be allocated to the project. It is critical for EA to learn from its successes and challenges while continuing to provide adequate yet increasingly streamlined infrastructure support. GFS infrastructure funding from the State is anticipated to be to be extremely tight, which means that programs and their operations will be expected to operate as efficiently as possible. Analysis and a transition period is therefore needed to ensure that the meaningful supports build during RTT-ELC Grant are not inadvertently compromised and that the ecosystem of programs work together to identify efficiencies in a measured manner as the State rolls out a mandatory system.

The Departments approve Washington State'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 Washington State's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Washington 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, Miriam Lund, at (202) 401-2871 or Miriam.Lund@ed.gov or your co-project officer Paul Noski, at (206) 615-2609 or Paul.Noski@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

CC: Bette Hyde, Director of the Department of Early Learning
Nicole Rose, PreK-3/Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program Administrator