



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of the Secretary

September 6, 2018

Scott Stump
Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Stump,

On behalf of the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE), I would like to thank you and your staff for the assistance you have already provided to the victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the willingness the U.S. Department of Education (ED or the Department) has displayed to work with PRDE as we continue working to restore operations to normal and rebuild in the aftermath of the hurricanes' devastation. At this time, PRDE would like to formally request additional fiscal flexibility for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), as amended by Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) under Section 241(b)(4) of WIOA.

Specifically, PRDE is requesting that the period of availability for the FFY 2016 AEFLA funds be extended an additional year, until September 30, 2019. The FY 2016 funds became available on July 1, 2016 and are available to obligate through Sept 30, 2018. As such, if the period of availability for the FY 2016 grant is not extended, about 30% of the FY 2016 award will lapse on September 30, 2018. Further, given the devastating impact the Hurricanes have had on PRDE and Puerto Rico in general, PRDE seeks this flexibility so that the destruction from Hurricanes does not result in lapsing of otherwise permissible costs.

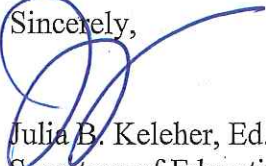
Following the aftermath of the Hurricanes, PRDE has worked collaboratively with the Department and the flexibility that the Department has exercised throughout this past year has been instrumental in our recovery efforts. The Hurricanes have had an extreme financial impact on the Island over the past year as significant State and local resources were directed to rescue efforts in the weeks following the storms and toward rebuilding efforts in the ensuing months. PRDE offices were closed for several weeks following the hurricanes and for months PRDE staff balanced efforts to restore ordinary operations, respond to damage caused by the hurricanes, and resume normal operations. In fact, normal operations did not begin again until the early part of 2018, and understandably obligations of the FY 2016 funds stalled. The Island is still working tirelessly to reconstruct infrastructure, including repairing storm-damaged school facilities across the Island. In addition, thousands of Puerto Rican residents have fled to the mainland, further contributing to the economic impact of the storms.

Lastly, as you may be aware on February 28, 2018, the Department acknowledged that between FY 2013 and FY 2014, PRDE experienced “an unforeseen precipitous decline in the State’s financial resources.”¹ On the basis of this economic hardship, the Department waived maintenance of effort requirements for PRDE’s Adult Education program for fiscal year 2014. PRDE is thankful the Department granted the waiver; however, the remaining portion of the grant was not received until February 2018.

My office would be happy to further discuss this request, should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Yanin Dieppa at 787-586-4191 or dieppapy@de.pr.gov. I will make myself available to discuss this requests and next steps with you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Julia B. Keleher, Ed. D.
Secretary of Education
Puerto Rico Department of Education

¹ U.S. Department of Education Approval of PRDE’s request for Waiver of Maintenance of Effort