



State of Arizona  
Department of Education



## Substantial Approval Guidance

- **What is the difference between substantial approval and SEA Director Approval?** *Substantial approval* means there is a submitted funding application with a reasonable attempt at a budget and that there is a General Statement of Assurances (GSA) in “SEA General Statement of Assurance Accepted” status. This is affirmation that an LEA intends to accept monies from a particular funding source and agrees to abide by all assurances in the GSA. *SEA Director Approval*, on the other hand, is confirmation that the grant program area has provided final director approval to the funding application submitted, and via this director approval the LEA understands that grant expenditures must meet all applicable rules and requirements of the funding source. SEA Director Approval status also enables the LEA to submit GME Reimbursement Requests during the applicable project period.
- **What is the earliest date for substantial approval?** The grant’s project start date is the earliest substantial approval date. For instance, July 1<sup>st</sup> is the project start date for many federal and state grants and thus July 1<sup>st</sup> would be the earliest substantial approval date. Applications submitted in a substantially approvable state *prior* to a grants project start date will receive the project start date as the substantial approval date.
- **What if my funding application isn’t substantially approved by the grant’s project start date?** It is important to remember that substantial approval is the **obligation date** tied to the date your funding application is submitted in a substantially approvable state. This means that once your grant project receives SEA Director approval, you may submit Reimbursement Requests in GME. Expenditures can then be reimbursed from the date the funding application was substantially approved. A substantial approval date of August 15th, for example, would prevent an LEA from being reimbursed for any expenditures which happened between July 1<sup>st</sup> and up to the August 15th substantial approval date.
- **Can my LEA just submit a request for pre-award costs to allow for missing a timely substantial approval date?** The ADE no longer has the authority to approve pre-award costs per the US Department of Education CFR200.458.

If you have any questions, please contact Grants Management via Help Desk at <https://helpdesk.azed.gov> or by phone at (602) 542-3901.

Sincerely,  
Grants Management