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Nita M. Lowey 21ST Century Community Learning Centers Request for Application

2024-25 (FY '26)

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I. Overview and Background

The Vermont Agency of Education (VTAOE) invites schools, non-traditional educators, and community-based organizations to apply for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) partnership grants for the purpose of providing high-quality afterschool¹ and summer learning opportunities for students who attend schools where 40% or more of the students are from low-income families (free/reduced lunch assistance) and/or are eligible for Title 1 Schoolwide Program status, and where the need for improved student performance is well documented.

The 21st CCLC initiative is authorized under Title IV part B of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Competitive grants are awarded to school and community partnerships that show the greatest promise of supporting the following overarching goal adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education: *Ensure that Vermont's public education system operates within the framework of high expectations for every learner and ensure that there is equity in opportunity for all.*

Under ESSA, the law outlines the purpose of the 21st CCLC investments as follows {Section 4201}

(a) Purpose --The purpose of this part is to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that—

- (1) provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet the challenging State academic standards;
- (2) offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, service learning, nutrition and health education, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs, technology education programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, mathematics, science, career and technical programs, internship or apprenticeship programs, and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and
- (3) offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

¹ Throughout this grant application, the term "afterschool" program refers to learning opportunities (programs, classes, & activities) provided outside the regular school day and may include programs that take place before school, after school, evenings, weekends, summers, or during school vacation days.

In addition, for several years the 21st CCLC initiative has been designed to support attainment of the following overarching long-term goals:

By 2025, we expect 100% of Vermont Schools to have:

- 1) Average scores in a proficient range for English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science.
- 2) Average scores in a “healthy zone” for physical education
- 3) A 100% 6-year graduation rate
- 4) A 100% of English Learners attain English Language Proficiency
- 5) 67.5% of students to be Career and College ready

At the state policy level, Act 78, the new state afterschool and summer grant program has been designed in alignment with 21C approaches. This year, The Vermont Agency of Education will be releasing three complementary grant competitions through these two funding sources in the fall of 2024. In the aggregate, these federal and state funded investments are designed to provide multi-year grant options with flexibility in terms of size, scope, and effort required. Considering the funding pathway that is matched to local context and capacity is an important decision point for all interested applicants. Further, 21C policy and intent is also consistent with Act 67, Vermont’s Community School legislation as strong afterschool and summer programming is consistent with the requirement for Expanded and Enriched Learning Opportunities. Afterschool and summer work could be a first and/or aligned step in developing full-service Community Schools

To implement strategies in service to the above framework and goals, 21C funded programs are expected to support Vermont’s [Education Quality Standards \(EQS\)](#). These standards include Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) -- locally-delineated content knowledge and skills that, when supplemented with any additional locally developed requirements, have been determined to qualify a student for earning a high school diploma. Intentional 21st CCLC alignment with local PBGRs is expected where possible; particularly with secondary-age programming that targets core content while at the same time developing *transferable skills*. Transferable Skills describe a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and dispositions that are determined to be critically important to success in today’s world, particularly in collegiate programs and modern careers. Transferable skills include communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, inquiry, problem solving and the use of technology.

II. Eligible Grantees

Eligible applicants include local educational agencies (LEAs); community-based organizations (CBOs); and other public or private entities, including faith-based organizations, or a consortium of two or more agencies, organizations, or entities. Municipalities may also apply. Communities with schools eligible for Title I Schoolwide Program status and/or with 40 percent of FRL assistance rates are eligible to apply. FY '24 data, when released, may also be used. To see if a school community is eligible under all indicators go to the [quick eligibility tracker](#). In addition, you may consult the latest [2024-free-and-reduced-eligibility-report](#) to view specifics of which schools are eligible to partner with community-based organizations or other public or private entities in applying for funding using this one indicator. Eligibility may also be determined through calculation of poverty based on the lunch assistance percentages of feeder

schools. Note that rates and eligibility criteria in general has become greater due to the inclusion of Medicaid data in the free/reduced indicator. The SWP indicator as well tends to include additional communities in some cases.

III. Award Amounts, Duration, and Options

A minimum estimated minimum federal 21C annual amount of at least \$650,000 will be available for dispersal under this grant competition over five years. The minimum annual 21st CCLC grant award allowed per federal statute is \$50,000 per year. In addition, additional funding may be applied to successful applications using Act 78 state afterschool funds, if federal funds do not exist to support all fundable applications.

New Programs: The maximum award for a single site grant award is \$145,000. If multiple sites are included within a grant application, the maximum upper award range is \$90,000- \$115,000 per site. Grants will be for five years assuming annual program objectives are met, and all reporting and monitoring requirements are successfully fulfilled. For a 21st CCLC grant, pending availability of federal funds and program performance, grant awards are funded up to 100% of the total budget for the first three years of funding. In year four, programs must show a sustainability base, and the applicant will receive 75% of the initial grant award. In year five, the applicant will receive 65% of the initial grant award.

Existing 21st CCLC programs: grantees are eligible to apply if their existing grant award expires on July 1, 2024. Current grantees are expected to demonstrate a high level of performance and sustainability in order to receive additional funding under this competition. Pending availability of federal funds and program performance, for current 21st CCLC programs excluding new expansion components, new grant awards will be level-funded for five years at no more than 50% of the total program budget.

Renewability

The [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) allows a State Education Agency (SEA) to renew Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center subgrants based on subgrantees' performance during the previous subgrant period [§4204(j)]. The renewability provision of ESSA may apply to subgrants one-time consistent with the terms of the original subgrant's performance period."

As part of this competition, current grantees whose awards end on July 1, 2024, may choose renewability, (renewing the same 5 year grant award) if they receive a high rating (minimum 85% meet or exceed rate) using the available objective metrics of the 21C statewide evaluation plan as determined by AOE. In this cohort, no grantee met that threshold and thus no applicant is eligible to renew their award, which, if they could, follows the exact same award language, expectations and procedures as approved in the prior award period. The maximum amount of funding that may be renewed from within any grant cohort will not exceed 15% of the estimated competition amount available. This may mean that in some competition cohorts that renewability may not be an option.

Grantees are not eligible for renewability under the following conditions:

- If any of the existing granted sites are no longer eligible to receive 21C funds.
- If any site within the past grant award period was defunded due to performance issues.
- If a project within the 5-year grant period was on a required action plan or received more than three required actions from a monitoring visit.
- If grant requirements were consistently not met during the grant period at the discretion of AOE (e.g. leadership, timely reporting completion, professional development)

Funding expectations for evaluation, assessment, and data collection

21C project investments must include a section on funding not counted in the amounts above of \$2000 for a single site project and an additional \$1000 per site in multi-site project up to an \$8000 maximum to better support systems in the important areas of evaluation, assessment, and data collection. The goal of this policy is three-fold:

- 1) To more efficiently and accurately complete federal reporting and state and local evaluation expectations
- 2) To enhance the use of timely accurate data and collection systems and methods for continuous improvement
- 3) To build and or enhance local capacity of data, evaluation, and assessment for 21C funded programs and well as to support closer integration with school-based SIS systems

Use of funds could be used within the following uses (e.g.):

- Data collection system upgrades including licenses directed or designed for/to afterschool program needs
- Wages to support required data entry, analysis, and conversions necessary for reporting
- Independent local evaluation activity of 21C funded programs
- Wages to support internal evaluation activity such as: formative and summative assessments, analysis, including focus groups
- Trainings and professional development in use of data, evaluation, or data collection systems
- Wages, stipends, or expansions to support the Youth Program Quality Assessment system and peer visits to other programs

IV. Program Requirements

Absolute Priority: The Agency of Education will make awards *only* to eligible entities that serve students who primarily attend schools that serve a high percentage of students from low-income families; and the families of students served by the 21st CCLC program.

Competitive Priority: The Agency of Education will provide three additional priority points to eligible entities that serve large numbers of youth in middle or high school sites that receive at least 85 points in this competition.

Costs: No costs related to the preparation of the application may be included as part of a proposal.

Disabilities: Programs must meet the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Students with disabilities may not be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. More information, including legal foundations and best practices regarding [Guidance for Children with Disabilities for 21st CCLC Funded Programs](#), is available on the Agency of Education website.

Entity Limits: Each awarded entity may receive up to two 21st CCLC grant awards at any one time. Every available effort should be made to unify all funded programs under one application.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Under Vermont's ESSA state plan, "ESSA requires Vermont to identify schools with "consistently underperforming" groups of students §200.19(b)(1) and (c) §200.19(b)(2). Vermont made its first identification for these supports in 2019. 21st CCLC applications should highlight information around schools with an equity determination or schools eligible for comprehensive supports as part of the application's need section.

Governance: Projects must have an active governance or advisory group composed of a broad group of stakeholders who assist with planning and decision-making. For many projects over time, Directors may become full participants on district leadership teams, which is a recommended best practice.

Location of 21st CCLC Programs: Typically, 21st CCLC programs and activities are carried out at school sites. However, programs may be located at facilities other than a school if:

- The site is at least as available and accessible as it would be at the school site;
- The LEA, school district, and/or school(s) are in agreement on the site;
- A clearly defined plan of communication between the site and the school is in place; and
- Safe transportation between the school and the alternative site has been arranged (funding for transportation is an allowable grant expense).

Private School Consultation: Title IX (Uniform Provisions) of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Local Education Agencies are mandated to consult with private school administrators

about their students’ needs and how they can be addressed via federal programs. This must occur in a timely and meaningful way during the design, development, and implementation of the program. Local Education Agencies must provide equitable services to private school students and their families if those students are part of the target population. The Agency strongly recommends that documentation of this process be maintained for auditing and annual reporting purposes.

Leadership: Projects must employ a Project Director for a minimum of 30 hours per week on average. A single site project may hire co-directors for an aggregate minimum of 30 hours per week. Salary and fringe benefits must be adequate to employ a highly skilled individual in this role. Full-time directors should be considered and are recommended for all projects. Additionally, site-based coordination within multi-site projects is required. A minimum of 20-25 hours weekly generally is needed for this role for a site. Single site projects may merge director and site coordination duties.

Duration: See Appendix L for Full Comprehensive Center expectations for the standard option. Summer Learning programs must be developed for a minimum of five weeks by the start of the year-two for both options. Full-day summer programming aligned to or unified with other offerings in the school or community are expected.

Program Income: The details of collecting program income (donations, sliding scales, fees) must be articulated and approved by the USDOE via a request letter sent to USDOE by the Agency of Education before program income may be generated as part of any grant award. AOE will request this information when these letters are generated.

V. Vermont Agency of Education Expectations

The Vermont Agency of Education has identified multiple elements of high-quality afterschool and summertime programming. The following baseline expectations have been determined to be indispensable for quality.

Area	Successful Practice
Strong and Effective Program Leadership	Meaningful job structure, hours, hiring practices, and appropriate compensation at the project and site levels result in effective on-going leadership of the project
Linkages to the School: Buildings, Programs, and Staff	<p>School buildings and their physical resources are fully used and leveraged for learning outside of the school day</p> <p>Projects compliment, align to, and/or are unified with other programs and plans in the school and/or community</p> <p>The project includes significant licensed teacher and other content experts as staff</p>

Area	Successful Practice
Effective Community Partnerships	The project includes multiple community partners and/or partnerships that will extend the breadth and depth of offerings
Safe and Appropriate Environments	21c safety standards are applied to all indoor and outdoor environments School-based emergency procedures are used or adapted
High-Interest Programming	Programs are diverse, engaging, relevant, fun, and rigorous. Multiple end-products, performances and celebrations result that demonstrate acquisition of content and <i>transferrable</i> skills
School Leadership Support	Principals (and other leaders) regularly provide support for the program as a key component of their educational vision
Attention to Regular Attendance	Full comprehensive centers are built. See Appendix L
Strong Instructional Leadership	A designed system of program planning, (intentionality) and staff development exists Effective content rich components are integrated into the overall program design including diverse opportunities for learning
Flexible Structures and Student Choice	All programs are attended by choice Youth centered practices are evident and multi-faceted
Data and Evaluation	Projects adopt common evaluation metrics, use additional locally generated measure(s) using a SMART framework, and have effective technical data systems in place

VI. Allowable Uses of Funds

In preparing the application, applicants should be mindful of the federal requirements that define allowable uses of funds.

Local grantees are limited to providing activities within the following list:

- Academic enrichment learning programs, mentoring programs, remedial education activities, and tutoring services, that are aligned with the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards; and local curricula that are designed to improve student academic achievement
- Well-rounded education activities, including such activities that enable students to be eligible for credit recovery or attainment
- Literacy education programs, including financial literacy programs and environmental literacy programs
- Programs that support a healthy and active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical activity program
- Services for individuals with disabilities
- Programs that provide after-school activities for students who are English learners that emphasize language skills and academic achievement
- Cultural programs
- Telecommunications and technology education programs
- Expanded library service hours
- Parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled to allow the students to improve their academic achievement
- Drug and violence prevention programs and counseling programs
- Programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (referred to in this paragraph as 'STEM'), including computer science, and that foster innovation in learning by supporting nontraditional STEM education teaching methods
- Programs that partner with in-demand fields of the local workforce or build career competencies and career readiness and ensure that local workforce and career readiness skills are aligned with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.)

The above uses of funds should be designed to link with and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

Additional federal regulations are articulated in OMB Circular A-87 (if the applicant is a school) or, in education agency regulations (34 CFR 76 & 80).

VII. 21st CCLC Alignment with Student Centered Learning and Flexible Pathways

21st CCLC funds can also be used to support systemic change by supporting whole school and community-based learning opportunities. Additional definitions of programming terminology or approaches that are fundable during out of school time in line with *Section VI allowable uses of funds* can be found in Appendix K. Use these definitions to consider all options.

Further, as an important allowable use of funds, the following is taken from USDOE’s [Final Non-Regulatory Guidance](#): “A 21st CCLC subgrantee may use 21st CCLC funds to offer an elective high school course that, for example, prepares low-achieving students to take advanced courses, provided that program is provided during out-of-school time. And, as described below, students taking the elective course may earn credit towards high school graduation. Generally, the use of 21st CCLC funds for a course that is required as a graduation requirement would violate the supplement, not supplant provision in section 4204(b)(2)(G) of the ESEA because, in the absence of the 21st CCLC funds, the school or LEA would have to provide sufficient opportunities for students to earn the requisite credits for graduation.

A subgrantee may use 21st CCLC funds for programs or activities, in out-of-school time, that allow students to receive credit towards high school graduation requirements if the programs or activities (1) are an expansion of the options for receiving high school credit in a particular academic area that would not have been provided without the 21st CCLC funds; and (2) do not replace or reduce any courses or programs normally provided by the school or LEA. (i.e., there is no reduction in the course offerings or costs in that particular academic area)”

This is consistent with Vermont’s Education Quality Standards where: Local Graduation Requirements (2120.8) – “Schools may or may not use credits for the purposes of demonstrating that a student has met the graduation requirements. When used, credits must specify the proficiencies demonstrated in order to attain a credit and shall not be based on time spent in learning. Further, students may receive credit for learning that takes place outside of the school, the school day, or the classroom. Any credits earned must occur under the supervision of an appropriately licensed educator.

VIII. Timeline

Paper Application Released	September 18, 2024	(AOE Weekly Field Memo)
GMS Application Release	October 2024	TBD
Applicant Training - Part 1 The Basics	October 16, 2024	9.00-11.30am
Applicant Training - Part 2 The Details	November 20, 2024	9.00-11.30am
Individual Applicant Team meetings	November-December	
E-Intent to Apply due date	November 22, 2024	
Application due date	January 24, 2025	4:30pm
Awards announced by	April 1, 2025	
Awards begin	July 1, 2025	

IX. Remote Applicant Workshops and Individual Technical Assistance

Applicant trainings will be held virtually on the days listed above from 9:00 AM-11:30 AM. Key information will be presented. These sessions will be recorded. Individualized applicant assistance can be requested anytime for project specific questions or assistance.

Bringing a team to trainings is essential for success. Sign up individuals to the [21C Applicant Mailing List](#) in order to receive all information related to this competition as well as to reserve your team members' attendance to trainings.

For general questions about this grant application, submit them via email to [Emanuel Betz](#) by January 15th, 2025. All applicant questions, responses, and resources will be forwarded to potential applicants via the applicant mailing list on an on-going basis.

It is strongly recommended to visit an existing 21st CCLC funded program in Vermont. The state coordinator can assist in connecting existing programs to applicants.

In addition, prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to review the following websites when considering whether or not to pursue a 21st CCLC investment.

Vermont Resources

[Vermont Agency of Education 21st CCLC Webpage](#)

[Vermont Afterschool Wiki](#)

[Vermont Agency of Education Proficiency-Based Learning](#)

[Vermont Agency of Education PBL Transferable Skills](#)

[Vermont Agency of Education Flexible Pathways](#)

[Vermont Afterschool Inc.](#)

National Resources

[U.S. Department of Education 21st CCLC Program](#)

[National Institute on Out-Of-School Time](#)

[National Summer Learning Association](#)

[Afterschool Alliance](#)

X. On-Line Grants Management System (GMS) and Due Date

The application will be submitted as part of the Agency of Education's [Grants Management System](#). The completed and signed e-submission must be submitted no later than 4:30 PM on January 24, 2025.

XI. Narrative Guidelines for Applicants

Submit information within the required tabs and instructions within the GMS system. The narrative section allows for up to 70,000 characters in the aggregate. An additional twenty total pages may be included within attachments excluding the MOU. Do not include letters of support. Failure to follow these directions could result in an application being rejected.

Structure your answers by addressing the following:

1. Planning and Process (5 points)

Provide a brief summary of the planning process used to submit this application. Referencing numerical data, use or adapt the planning chart template Appendix B summarizing the planning meetings and writing sessions, personnel and time spent creating this application.

2. Need (10 Points)

By articulating specific data and using their associated GMS text area boxes, provide an evaluation of the community needs and available resources for the center including the needs of students and their families. Describe how the proposed programs will address the needs of students and their families (including the needs of working families). Include how the established need will be addressed by the program. Include as well, a description of the transportation plan for how students will travel safely to and from the program and home.

In addition, integrate in your answers how the program will be based on the following measures of effectiveness:

- An assessment of objective data (see data sources listed in Appendix F of this application) regarding the need for before and after school and summer programs and activities in the schools or community
- An established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic enrichment opportunities
- Measures of student success that align with the regular academic program of the school and the academic needs of participating students

3. High Quality Programming (45 Points)

A. Program Description. (15 points)

In the site tab as part of this section, enter the required details of programs by site within each field. For the program schedule fields, include all program schedules from start to finish including time blocks with brief component descriptions. As part of this narrative section, expand on the schedule(s) and describe integral program procedures such as staffing ratios, type, and qualifications. Include how food, physical activity, and other programming items will support quality.

B. Program Design. (15 points)

Describe the program design(s). Describe the types of programming that will be offered for each age level. Include how the programs are expected to improve student learning and engagement, including learning outcomes in content areas and in support of transferrable skills. Include strategies that will be made to ensure that programming is student-centered and that every participant has a high level of engagement.

C. Program coordination for access, equity, and efficiency (15 points)

Describe how the proposed program will coordinate Federal, State, and local programs and initiatives to make the most effective use of public resources. Describe how the program aligns and integrates with the regular school day and other out of school day programs and systems (e.g., shared staff, space, training, policies, graduation requirements, LEA comprehensive needs assessments, schools' continuous improvement plans, Schoolwide Title 1 plans, Recovery Plans). Describe how the program will provide equitable access and service for all participants including those with disabilities. List any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation and identify specific steps will you take to address such barriers, if they exist.

4. Program Management (10 Points)

A. Effective Leadership (5 points)

Each application must include a project director under most conditions for a minimum of 30 hours per week. Describe the structure, qualifications and attributes that will be required. For multi-site projects, include the plan for site-based coordination/leadership. Include specific organizational leadership support that the organization and partnerships will bring to assure project success. Describe expectations that will be set by leadership with regard to lesson planning, course development, pedagogy and integration.

B. Systems (5 points)

a. Safety

Describe the safety (including physical and/or social-emotional) practices and protocols that will be followed. Include how emergency and other school-based or alternative protocols will be used or adapted.

b. Professional Development

What staff training and professional development activities and processes will occur to assure continuous improvement within the project?

c. Communications

How will the organization disseminate information about the center to the community and families in a manner that is understandable and accessible?

d. Volunteers. If volunteers are used, describe how the organization will encourage and use appropriately qualified people.

5. Evaluation (10 points)

A. Program Goals and Objectives (5 points combined with B below)

Be sure to review the federally required 21C reporting measurements and the 21C statewide evaluation plan, which should be integrated into your evaluation plan. In addition, articulate any additional goals statements, identifying the areas of primary focus for your local evaluation and describe any additional measurements the program will use to determine success, including clearly defined program goals, numeric objectives, and specific summative outcomes/measures. Include a description of who will carry out the work of the evaluation and evidence that the plan is realistic following a SMART framework. Include statistical outcomes achieved from the last year, if any, and if a returning project, reference results from the statewide plan and/or other indicators.

B. Additional allocated funding to support local Evaluation, Assessment and Data Collection systems (5 points combined with A above)

Review the policy and allocated funds for this part in section III and/or in the General Information tab in GMS. Using the text area box below, provide explanatory information about how the funds will be used.

C. Evidence (5 points)

Describe how the project will use best practices, including research and evidence-based practices, to provide educational and related activities that will complement and enhance academic performance, achievement, postsecondary and workforce preparation, and positive youth development.

6. Partnerships and Sustainability (10 Points)

A. Partnerships (5 points)

Describe the partnerships and commitments between a local education agency, a community-based organization, and other public or private entities. In addition, use the Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) template that is included with this application as a starting point, develop and submit a signed MOU that defines the service and program implementation agreements between the key partners. The MOU should describe the nature and details of the partnerships between the LEA(s), community-based organization(s), and other public or private organization(s) or partners with evidence that teachers, parents, principal(s), district and/or community leaders were involved in designing the proposed programs and will assist in their implementation. Key partners are directly responsible for the implementation of the program. Partners can be individual leaders. Signatures must include non-school organizations and may include individuals as partners if the local educational agency demonstrates that it is unable to partner with a community-based organization in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality. The included sample MOU template is a resource and may be amended or another format may be used. All principals of participating schools must sign an MOU.

B. Sustainability Plan (5 points)

Describe the plans for the continuous strengthening of the partnership between the local educational agency, community-based organization, and another public or private organization (if appropriate), including plans for continuing the proposed programs beyond the five-year period of funding. For the *standard* pathway. Attach a preliminary or revised sustainability plan chart.

7. Budget and Budget Narrative (10 Points)

The budget and budget narrative must demonstrate a detailed and logical connection to the goals of the project and should be specific enough to give reviewers a clear idea of project priorities and the focus for funding. At a minimum, the budget must include the following:

A. Budget Items (5 points)

Complete the budget requirements within the GMS tab(s). In addition, provide a detailed aligned budget using Appendix J including up to sixteen required categories: project director, site coordinator, instructors, benefits, retirement contributions, contracted services, professional development, supplies, equipment, transportation, travel/mileage, purchased services, professional services, food, rent, and indirect. Include the 21st CCLC request, all non-21st CCLC cash funds, and the total project budget.

B. Budget Narrative (5 points)

Provide a detailed narrative describing how each line item was calculated and for what purpose. The budget descriptions must include sufficient detail and should include sub-categories (e.g., *Instructors*: include tiers, rates, hours; *Benefits*: include types, amount, rationale). For non-21st

CCLC cash funds, include the source of the fund, the amount, and supporting details. If special or unusual costs are proposed, include explicit detail of where these costs are in the budget.

XII. Selection Process

All applications will receive an initial eligibility review by AOE staff to ensure that the application was received on time, and contains all required guidelines, sections, and signatures. If an application does not meet these basic requirements, the application may be removed for consideration. All applications will then be read, reviewed, and scored by independent readers and panelists with extensive experience in such areas as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, out-of-school time programs, education, school effectiveness, and community-based learning. Each question can receive points up to the maximum that is indicated. There are 103 total potential points. After the independent reviewers rate the applications, a panel will be convened to finalize the review of the applications and ratings, and make a funding decision (Fund, Fund with Conditions, Do Not Fund) for each application. In the event of a tie score, the applications serving schools with the highest poverty level shall receive priority, assuming funds are available. If there is still a statistical tie, a special panel will be convened to make the final selection.

XIII. Grant Award Decisions and Disposition of Applications

The Agency reserves the right to award in part, to reject any and all applications in whole or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities or omissions if, in its judgment, the best interest of the students would be served. After receiving the grant application, the Agency reserves the right not to award all grants, to negotiate specific grant amounts and set conditions, and to select certain grantees regardless of points awarded as part of the evaluation process to meet federal requirements or State Board of Education priorities. In addition, the Agency reserves the right to change the dollar amount of grant awards.

All awards are subject to the availability of federal funds. Grantees will be required to submit and sign a final grant agreement award document with the Vermont Agency of Education.

XIV. Other requirements

Each year, grantees are required to submit data and/or Annual Performance Reports (APR) that describe project activities, accomplishments, and outcomes. The two purposes of these reports are to: (1) demonstrate that substantial progress has been made toward meeting the objectives of the project as outlined in the grant application, and (2) collect data that addresses the performance indicators for the 21st Century Community Learning Center program.

A funded applicant must commit to:

- (1) Participating in statewide evaluation activities conducted by the Vermont Agency of Education and the U.S. Department of Education including submitting data through the federal 21APR system.
- (2) Participating in site review monitoring processes.

- (3) Sending a representative team including the project director to Agency of Education professional development activities not to exceed five days per year.
- (4) Applicants may be asked to clarify certain aspects of their applications or meet specific conditions. Finalists may be asked to participate in subsequent activities such as an oral interview or to receive an onsite visit to clarify application information. Applicants will be contacted if such information is necessary.

XV. Note regarding plagiarism

If a discovery of plagiarism is made known or brought to the attention of officials at the Agency of Education during a grant competition, at the discretion of the Agency, the Agency has the right to remove the grant application for funding consideration because of the occurrence of cause. If generative artificial intelligence is used and/or copied into an application, appropriate footnoting including the tool, and an explanation is required.

XVI. Grievance Procedure

Applicants have the right to appeal the funding decision, as outlined in section 76.401(c) of EDGAR. A request for a hearing must be made within 30 days of notification. The Vermont Agency of Education will schedule the hearing within 30 days of receiving the request. Prior to the hearing the applicant must provide a detailed statement of facts and circumstances which gave rise to the appeal. After the hearing, the applicant will receive a written notification of the results of the hearing, including findings of fact and reasons for the ruling, within 10 days from the hearing.

XVII. Non-Profit Organizations as Fiduciary

Applications from non-profit organizations can receive assistance to help determine their capacity to administer a comprehensive 21C funded program prior to application submission. Areas of assistance include:

1. Analysis of needed fiscal infrastructure and capacity.
2. Previous experience with similar amounts of funding at the state or federal level through government, foundations, or private grants
3. Staffing, governance, legal and organizational capacity to manage and sustain a large 21st CCLC funded initiative.
4. Linkage with the school site(s) including a clear plan of communication.

Appendix A - Applicant Checklist

(Do not submit)

- Eligibility determined**
- Readiness analyzed and assured**
 - Self-Assessment completed**
 - Team created**
 - Team members attend trainings and set up an internal process**
- Team roles and writer(s) identified**
- GMS name and password created**
- GMS application created in system**
- Letter of Intent submitted by deadline**
- All GMS tabs entered**
- Requirements reviewed for compliance**
- GMS attachments submitted**
 - Appendix G-MOU-Does not count in attachment limit
 - Appendix J-Budget Template
 - Additional optional attachment pages not exceeding the allowed limit of 20
- GMS application proofread by third party and checked for accuracy**
- GMS application characters counted not to exceed 70,000**
- GMS application consistency check completed**
- GMS application submitted and locked for final submit by the authorized representative**
- GMS application assurances signed and final submitted by Superintendent/CEO**

Appendix B - Planning Chart Template

Data below will be entered in GMS Tabs

List planning meetings and delineate writing sessions that occurred to create this application.

Purpose	Participants/Titles	Date/Hours Worked	Notes
Totals			

Appendix B-1 - GMS Site and Funding Tab Fields - Paper Version

For each school site in year three creating a full comprehensive center

School Name _____

Free and Reduced Lunch _____% Regular attendees served annually _____

How long has the program been in existence in years _____ Total school site population _____

Afterschool, before school, summer service, other service, total service by weeks and days

Grades served _____ Service schedule and time blocks _____

Eligibility:

- Free Reduced used for eligibility
- Title 1 Schoolwide Plan status used for eligibility
- Feeder model used for eligibility

Program Income* Will the site be collecting program income (donations/fees) between July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026? Yes () No ()

Has the site received an equity determination or is the site eligible for comprehensive supports under Every Student Succeeds Act? Yes () No () NA ()

Funding Information Tab

Has this proposal been submitted but not funded in the last five years? _____

21C annual request \$ _____

New site expansion annual request \$ _____

Total annual request \$ _____

Total regular attendees served annually all sites _____

Total youth served annually all sites _____

New/Expansion site(s) total regular attendees served annually _____

Appendix C - Assurance and Signature Page

For reference only, will be entered within GMS

- The program will take place in a safe and easily accessible facility. §4204(b)(2)(A)(i)
- The program was developed and will be carried out in *active* collaboration with the schools that participating students attend (including through the sharing of relevant data among the schools) all participants of the eligible entity, and any partnership entities in compliance with applicable laws relating to privacy and confidentiality and in alignment with the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards. §4204(b)(2)(D)(i)
- The program will primarily target students who primarily attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs under section 1114 and the families of such students. §4204(b)(2)(F)
- Funds under the program will be used to increase the level of State, local and other non-Federal funds that would, in the absence of funds under this part, be made available for authorized programs and activities authorized under this part and in no case supplant Federal, State, local, or non-Federal funds. §4203(a)(9)
- The community was given notice of the applicant's intent to submit an application, and after the submission, the applicant will provide for public availability and review of the application and any waiver request. §4204(b)(2)(L)
- Timely and meaningful consultation occurred with appropriate officials of private schools located in the area in the development of this application.
- The proposed program will be in alignment with the challenging State academic standards and any local standards. §4204(b)(2)(D)(ii)

By signing below, you agree to honor the above assurances.

LEA/CEO SIGNATURE:

Superintendent or other

Date

Appendix D - Self-Assessment Tool for Sustainability

Strategy	% 21c funded projects currently using (pre-Covid data)	Team brainstorm/notes column (who?/what?/how?/timeline)
Partner organizations and individuals	100%	
Federal snack and meal programs	100%	
School and or SU budgets	71%	
Other Federal Grants (not including food, title, or subsidy)	66%	
Sliding scale fee scale donation or other program income approach must include free slots	57% If so, no youth may be turned away for inability to pay	
Fundraising/ donations	43%	
Licensing and subsidy reimbursement	38%	
Title funding	29%	
Other state Funds	29%	
Other local funds or grants including foundations	14%	
Medicaid	13%	
Recreation Departments	13%	

		Supporting systems
Quality professional development initiatives	Levels vary	These need not go explicitly in the sustainability plan unless desired
Communication and outreach including Events and celebrations of knowledge	Levels vary	These need not go explicitly in the sustainability plan unless desired
Data and evaluation systems	Levels vary	These need not go explicitly in the sustainability plan unless desired
Business partnerships and support	Levels vary	These need not go explicitly in the sustainability plan unless desired
Parent involvement	Levels vary	These need not go explicitly in the sustainability plan unless desired
Leadership Development activities	Levels vary	These need not go explicitly in the sustainability plan unless desired

Note: Current sustainability plans can be requested from [Emanuel Betz](#)
Plans and other resources will be shared with all applicants on the email list.

Appendix E - Sample Sustainability Plan Chart

Adapt and Input in GMS

Describe your sustainability plan components using or adapting this template. The first three rows are random examples.

Area*	Strategy**	Financial Goal***	Details
<i>Partnerships</i>	<i>Develop partnerships with new out of town program providers and individuals</i>	<i>Develop one new partner annually between 2020 and 2025 resulting in \$1000 of in-kind new services each year</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>-Get three retired teachers from local area</i> <i>-Develop college-based program options</i> <i>- Build artist collaboration with local community artists</i>
<i>Fees</i>	<i>Bring in \$5000 per year in fees by year two without turning away a single low-income student</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>\$2500 in fees by June 30, 2021</i> <i>\$3500 in fees by June 30, 2023</i> <i>\$7500 in fees by June 30, 2025</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>-Fee structure will follow a tiered sliding scale</i> <i>-Free slots will be offered to all low-income students regardless of ability to pay</i>
<i>Sponsorships</i>	<i>Get 1 sponsor for each session of programming</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>\$100 per session or \$500 by 6/30/21</i> <i>\$200 per session or \$1000 by 6/30/23</i> <i>\$400 per session or \$2000 by 6/30/25</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sponsor gets mentions in communications</i> <i>Sponsor is recognized in 1 public forum and in posters around town</i>

Area* There are many sustainability “areas” in bold in the Appendix D tool. Consider each area for a strategy.

Strategy Describe** the sustainability strategy

Financial Goal* Set** an annual target(s) over a period covering five years

Appendix F - Objectives Measures

Examples of qualitative and quantitative information, including objective measures that may be submitted to document program impact on learning

- Program attendance data
- School attendance data (absence, tardiness, truancy)
- Participant hours
- Volunteer hours
- Program hours
- Grades, grade-point averages
- Homework completion data
- Percent of students meeting annual performance targets
- Gates/MacGinitie Reading Assessments
- Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessments
- Search Institute Developmental Asset Survey
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
- Discipline data
- Dropout rates
- Prevention data
- Student assistance program data
- School nurse data
- Guidance counselor data
- Surveys of teachers, students, and parents
- Other locally designed/selected assessments
- ESSA accountability measures as described in the VT state plan: Current status and student growth academic proficiency indicators in English Language Arts, Mathematics (SBAC) and Science and: Climate and physical education measures and: English Language (ELP) proficiency indicators
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Interim assessments
- Student mobility (enrollment stability) data

Appendix G - Sample Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) between Key Partners

Attach MOU in GMS

This is a template that is best modified to locally generated agreements except part IX and X, which must be submitted.

I. Parties of the Memorandum of Agreement

The parties would include the partners who are providing services and/or financial support to the afterschool program.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to establish an agreement among the above-mentioned parties concerning their respective roles and responsibilities for implementation of a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grant from the Vermont Agency of Education.

This agreement is to establish and coordinate joint processes and procedures for the provision of afterschool (including summer, before school, weekends, evenings, in-service days, vacation breaks, etc.) programs for students, family engagement activities, staff development, supervision, and program evaluation.

III. Duration of the Agreement

The agreement should be for a period of at least one year and up to five years.

IV. 21st Century Community Learning Centers Vision and Overview

Since the MOU is intended to describe and detail how partners will contribute to the establishment and maintenance of the afterschool program, it is important that all partners to the MOU share a collective vision for the program and have a common understanding as to the scope and purpose of the program. The description provided under this section will serve as a critical framework for the program as it makes decisions on the implementation of the 21st CCLC investment.

V. Duties of Parties

In this section, the responsibilities and agreements of each party are described separately.

For the lead applicant, the responsibilities and agreements could include:

- Serve as the fiduciary for the grant.
- Hire, fund, supervise, and evaluate the position of the project director and any other position hired through that agency.
- Provide needed support including office space, telephone use, and computer use for afterschool staff.

- Provide classroom space and all other appropriate space to accommodate the afterschool program.
- Provide custodial support, office support, and other appropriate support to ensure the program runs smoothly and that children are safe afterschool.
- Be responsible for purchasing necessary materials/supplies for designated components in accordance with the 21st CCLC budget.
- Support staff in trainings and professional development opportunities in areas related to afterschool programming and issues.
- Participate in the evaluation of the afterschool program at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Complete paperwork related to any association with the program.
- Provide access to assessment and other required federal data including “GPRA measures” for the purposes of program evaluation and federal and state reporting. 21CCLC annual reporting never reports by individual student.
- Assist the program in developing, implementing, and making progress on its sustainability plan.
- The Program Director will participate in statewide meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Recruit and refer students to the afterschool program.
- The Program Director or other appropriate person will participate on the Afterschool Advisory Team.
- Assume payroll responsibilities for afterschool positions, as budgeted.
- Communicate and collaborate with all partners.
- Support the afterschool program in developing appropriate curricula, running an effective learning lab and/or tutoring program, and establishing clear linkages with the school day.
- Establish a collaborative relationship between school day staff and afterschool staff including having a significant number of school-based staff committed to working in the program.

For a partner, the following may apply:

- Hire, supervise, and evaluate designated afterschool positions in consultation with the Program Director.
- Provide appropriate space or programming to accommodate the afterschool program.
- Recruit and refer students to the afterschool program.
- Communicate and collaborate with all partners about rules, expectations, and norms
- Communicate and collaborate with school partners about curriculum and instruction
- Establish a collaborative relationship between organization staff and afterschool staff.
- Complete paperwork related to and associated with the program.

- Provide access to assessment and other available data for the purposes of program evaluation.
- Participate in the evaluation of the afterschool program at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Assist the program in developing, implementing, and making progress on its sustainability plan.
- The Program Director or other appropriate person will participate on the Afterschool Advisory Team.

VI. Decision Making Process

- All major administrative decisions concerning policy and personnel of the afterschool program shall be brought to the Afterschool Advisory Team. The Advisory Team consists of (list partners) and the Program Director. Decisions will be reached by group consensus whenever possible and appropriate. The Advisory Team will meet at least four times per year or as needed, if necessary. The Program Director will oversee and make all day-to-day decisions, when appropriate for the operations of the program. If partners cannot come to a mutual agreement, the Executive of the lead agency will have final decision-making authority.
- The Program Director will bring issues to the Advisory Team. They will be responsible for clarifying policies and program goals with the direct service team. The Program Director will supervise all afterschool staff in their role with the afterschool program. Collaborators will have program and technical oversight of staff in their agencies.
- Hiring and firing of the appropriate staff will be the responsibility of the agency for which they are responsible. The Program Director will assist partners in interviewing and hiring staff that will be working in the afterschool program through their respective agencies. In addition, the Program Director will provide input into the performance evaluation of all partner agency staff working with the afterschool program.

VII. Meetings

- The Afterschool Advisory Team will meet four times per year or more if necessary, about key decisions and issues related to successful program implementation.
- The Afterschool Program direct service staff will meet regularly to discuss program issues and planning and to participate in professional development opportunities.

VIII. Procedures for Modification and Termination

- The MOU may be modified, revised, extended, or renewed by mutual written consent of all parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by all parties. Submission of a revised MOU does not necessarily require a modification to the local plan.
- Any party of the MOU may terminate their participation in this MOU by giving not less than (90) calendar days’ prior written notice of intent to terminate to each of the partners. In such a case, termination by one or more of the parties to this MOU does not alter the terms or obligations of the other parties to this MOU.
- An individual partners’ participation in the afterschool program may be terminated for non-compliance with the MOU provided the other parties provide 30 days’ written notice clearly outlining the reasons for the termination. The termination letter shall be sent to all parties via certified mail. The partner to be terminated may appeal this decision by responding in writing to the termination notice within 14 days of receipt. The partners shall then convene a meeting, prior to the 30-day termination date, to discuss the appeal. If the partners cannot come to a mutual agreement to terminate the partner or alter their responsibilities so they can adequately participate in the MOU, the Director of the lead agency shall make the final determination.

IX. Severance Clause

If any part of this agreement becomes unenforceable or illegal, then the agreement will continue in force, but the offending provision(s) shall be severed from the agreement and will have no effect on the remaining services agreed to and associated performance.

This MOU is a zero-dollar exchange agreement. If there is an anticipated monetary exchange of goods and services outside of the MOU, local, state, and federal procurement policies and procedures must be followed.

X. Signatures (all principals and Superintendent of participating schools must sign)

All partners in this agreement sign to confirm their acceptance of its terms by their signature.

Supervisory Union or School District

Superintendent

Date

Key Partner

Director Date

School

Principal Date

School

Principal Date

Key Partner

Director Date

Key Partner

Appendix H - Intent to Apply Form

Use and submit this e-[Intent to Apply Form](#)

Form details for informational purpose only

Due November 22, 2024

DO NOT USE

(1) Name of Project:

(2) Fiduciary:

(3) Contact Person:

(4) Phone:

(5) Email:

(6) Position/ Title:

(7) Number of Sites/ Schools:

(8) Grade Levels of Students to be Served:

(9) Names of Sites/ Schools (please note that ALL sites/schools must meet the eligibility requirements specified on page 4 of the grant application):

(10) Key Partners:

(11) Estimated Amount to be Requested:

(12) New sites or expansion included?

(13) Will any elementary site collect program income? (fees/donations) Insert any details above.

(14) Please provide a brief description of the proposed project (1 paragraph):

The [Cognito INTENT TO APPLY Form](#) must be received by Emanuel Betz at the Vermont Agency of Education (Emanuel.Betz@vermont.gov) no later than November 22, 2024 for an application to be accepted in the 2024-25 competition. Applicants are not locked into letter of intent data, but AOE should be made aware of any major changes if they occur prior to submission.

Appendix J Budget- Budget Template

Attach in GMS Section 7

	Grand Total (all funds)	Total 21c Request (grant request)	Total non- 21c Funds (cash only)	Project Office 21c funds	Project Office non- 21c funds	Site 1 21c funds	Site 1 Non-21c funds	Additional Site 21c funds	Additional site non-21c funds
Project Director									
Site Coordinators									
Instructors									
Benefits									
Retirement Contributions									
Contracted Services									
Professional Development									
Supplies									
Equipment									
Transportation									
Travel/Mileage									
Purchased Services									
Professional Services									

	Grand Total (all funds)	Total 21c Request (grant request)	Total non- 21c Funds (cash only)	Project Office 21c funds	Project Office non- 21c funds	Site 1 21c funds	Site 1 Non-21c funds	Additional Site 21c funds	Additional site non-21c funds
Food									
Rent									
Indirect									
Total									

Appendix K – Student Centered Terminology

AFTERSCHOOL

A generic term denoting a period of time when a structured program for youth occurs anytime outside of the school day. This can include activities and programs that may occur before school, afterschool, during the summer, and on weekends, evenings, and school vacations periods.

BLENDED LEARNING

An education program in which content and instruction are delivered both in a traditional classroom setting and through virtual learning that allows for student choice around time, place, path, and/or pace.

COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING (SERVICE LEARNING)

A program that combines meaningful service to the community with a student's learning goals. Students improve their academic and transferable skills and personal development by applying what they learn in school to a valuable, significant, and necessary service which has real consequences to the community; they then reflect on their experience to reinforce the link between their service and their learning.

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

High quality programs within communities and schools designed to serve learners on a regular basis by providing unique opportunities for academic growth, hands-on learning, and personal development. Often these programs are provided by schools in collaboration with non-profit organizations, museums, and other local entities. These opportunities can occur beyond traditional school hours and outside of the school building. *Note: This approach may be funded with 21st CCLC dollars if they take place during non-school hours.*

FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

Any combination of high-quality expanded learning opportunities, including academic and experiential components, which build and assess attainment of identified proficiencies and lead to secondary school completion, civic engagement, and postsecondary readiness. Flexible pathways allow students to apply their knowledge and skills to tasks of personal interest as part of the personalized learning planning process.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

Learning outcomes, instructional and assessment strategies and educational experiences customized to meet the needs of individual students.

PERSONALIZATION

A learning process in which schools help students assess their own talents and aspirations, plan a pathway toward their own purposes, work cooperatively with others in challenging tasks, maintain a record of explorations, and demonstrate their learning against clear standards in a

wide variety of media, all with the close support of adult mentors and guides. – *National Association of Secondary School Principals*

PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Systems and approaches that deepen student learning by incorporating each student's interests, strengths and needs - including student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn - to achieve the goals of active engagement, academic success, and preparation for post-secondary opportunities. While often less formalized, personalized learning and personalized instructional approaches are critical to students in kindergarten through grade 6 as well.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

An approach to education in which learners explore real-world problems and challenges to address learning targets.

VIRTUAL LEARNING

Learning delivered through a Web-based platform that employs a variety of digital tools, content, and supports and allows for student choice around time, place, path, and/or pace. Virtual learning can facilitate both individual and collective learning and can occur synchronously and asynchronously.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

An educational program or experience involving student interactions with industry or community professionals in real, virtual, online, or simulated work environments that exposes learners to postsecondary options, provides opportunities for skill development and proficiency attainment, and allows students to reinforce and deepen their school-based learning.

Appendix L - Full Comprehensive Centers

The term “full comprehensive center” denotes a project that is large in scope and in impact. 21st CCLC funds support full comprehensive centers. Be sure that your community is ready and able to build and maintain a full comprehensive center.

A Full Comprehensive Center

Area	Larger school example (n>80 students) school year and summer combined	Small school example (n<80 students) school year and summer combined	Summer Programs
# of programming days	150-220	150-220	25+
Number of daily programming hours	2-3	2-3	4-8
# of weeks	32+ school year 5+ for summer	32+ school year 5+ for summer	5 (required minimum)
# regular attendees	32%-50% of program attendees	32%-50% of program but should be higher	varies
# attendees in the program	50% of total school population	50%-100%	varies
% free and reduced lunch and IEP/504 attendees served	Same or higher than the school average	Same or higher than the school average	Same or higher than the school average
Suggested start-up cost range	\$50,000-\$150,000	\$50,000-\$115,000 and likely teamed with other sites to form a multi-site project	--

Appendix M - Application Quality Guide

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
Overall	Poor Confusing Limited Unconvincing Vague Unrealistic Underwhelming Disjointed Untested	Average Clear Complete Representative Resonant Realistic Acceptable Structured Tested	Exemplary Convincing Achievable Robust Comprehensive Performing Innovative Elegant Proven
1. Planning (5 points maximum)	One person writing in complete or near complete isolation Common meeting times with partners are limited Lead writer meets and plans, but other activities are limited in scope The effort in developing the product is substandard versus the average	One main writer working with a small group or team School leadership provided input and attended planning meetings Leadership of other key partners from the community are represented in meetings and other activities Evidence of teamwork and end product meets or exceeds the norm	A cohesive project team exists including a variety of stakeholders and partners who met together regularly to plan Team leaders lead a team process, and the work is shared within a project team Evidence of diverse and/or exemplary planning activities Effort expended is obvious and end product is exemplary

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
2. Program Need (10 points maximum)	Poverty data averages around 40% and there may be lower need compared with other applications	Poverty data is above the average for applicants	Poverty data indicates the greatest need versus other applications. School(s) have an equity determination, small school(s) demonstrate equity needs, or school(s) are eligible for comprehensive supports
	Limited school data demonstrating academic need is used	Clear school data including academic data demonstrates need	Compelling, well thought out school and other supporting data shows strong academic and other needs
	The plan does not include meaningful performance measures	A diversity of performance measures are used, but it is not clear how they connect and inform the proposed program design	There is a strong assessment of community and other needs, and the results are used to inform the proposal
	The connection between need and the proposal is not established	There is some clarity as to how the proposed programs will generally meet the needs of children (and families)	A clear connection exists between the program being proposed and students' needs; with program design linked to identified need
3. Programming (45 points maximum)	Dosage is below range	Dosage is in recommended range(s) with a clear effective design	Dosage is in upper recommended range for afterschool and summer with a superior accompanying rationale based on the option chosen
	Program strategies are unclear or not fully developed	A variety of program strategies are proposed and well-designed including effective academic component(s)	Programming is intentional, well-designed, and purposeful, including opportunities for personalization including a rich variety of explicit strategies and approaches

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
Programming (Continued)	Program descriptions lack detail	Program detail includes and numbers of students served, schedules, days, offerings, sites, ratios, curriculum, rationale, staffing configurations	All program details are clearly presented and support other assertions throughout the proposal
	There is limited evidence that a student-centered approach is used or considered	A student-centered approach is evident but not central to programs	A student-centered approach is clearly articulated in detail
	The staffing plan relies on lower skilled workers	The staffing plan relies on a variety of quality staff	The staffing plan includes highly skilled workers and leverages local available talent
	The program design lacks cohesion	The program design is varied and tied to a variety of learning outcomes	The program design is carefully constructed and explained, valuing student choice and using a variety of strategies with the ability to continuously improve and adapt to need on multiple levels
	Safety protocols lack specificity	Safety protocols are adequate and clear.	Physical and emotional safety protocols are articulated and integrated with the school day
	The program is limited in scope and staffing qualifications are not specified or seem weak	The proposal constitutes a diverse staffing approach	Staff are highly qualified. The program employs or plans to employ a number of school day teachers and professionals
	The proposal lacks a variety of opportunities. Student choice and appeal seems limited.	Many programs would appeal to children and youth and engage them regularly	Programming is exciting and engaging. There are ample opportunities for students to learn, explore, and develop skills. Regular attendance is assured.
	Linkages to the school day are limited or non-existent	School day linkages are emerging or growing	School day linkages are robust and evident with multiple examples

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
Programming (Continued)	There is limited evidence of coordination of programs and resources, and the project design is separate or lacks the ability to integrate over time	There is evidence of coordination of programs and resources	Initiatives across multiple domains are integrated into an effective design that serves individual and program needs
4. Program Management (10 points maximum)	The director's position is not well-designed, and it is unclear who might fill this position or what their qualifications will be	The director's position is fairly well-defined, but it may not be clear how the position fits into the overall school, district, or organizational structure	A well-qualified and experienced project director (role) has been identified or a solid and thorough plan is in place to recruit and retain one within a functional and supportive organization
	It is not clear how the school leadership supports the program	There is evidence that the school leadership is invested in the project	There is ample evidence that the school leadership team not only supports, but will use the project to implement its educational vision
	Strategies that support instructional leadership are limited or non-existent	A variety of strategies that support instructional leadership are articulated but are not thoroughly designed	Explicit strategies are proposed around lesson planning, course development and on-going assessment and improvement
	Limited effort or attention to the value of communication with students, parents and community is in evidence.	At least three methods of communication are described that appeal to a cross section of the community	A system of integrated communication strategies will be implemented
	Professional Development opportunities are limited	Professional development activities exist, yet do not meet the need	Professional development activities are differentiated and meet articulated need(s)

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
5. Evaluation and Evidence (10 points maximum)	The questions, goals, objectives, and outcomes are minimal, or not well thought out	The questions, goals, objectives, and summative outcomes are in existence, but all components of a SMART goal may not be met.	The questions, goals, objectives, and outcomes are concise, well thought out, and are clearly linked to a SMART framework (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time sensitive)
	Only a few indicators are used, and there are few specific targets	The proposed design and measurements are compelling, but certain aspects of the plan could be improved	Multi layered evidence and data is presented that is linked to the program proposal making a powerful case, integrated with state and federal measures
	Three or fewer pieces of evidence accompany a narrative that is lacking.	At least five pieces of evidence across different domains accompany a compelling narrative	A mixture of academic and other performance measures includes multiple assessments using school and other data and linked to valid research-based approaches
	There is limited evidence that best practices and research are being leveraged or understood	Performance measures are part of the plan and Correlational studies are referenced and relevant	A number of scientifically based research citations were used; Experimental or quasi-experimental study(s) and practice are aligned
	It is not clear who will do the evaluation work	There are adequate funds for a director or evaluator to do the work and there are linkages to other systems	The plan is clear, informed by people with expertise, and systems are aligned
	For a returning project, results from the statewide plan and/or other indicators are limited and may raise questions about the efficacy of the last investment.	For a returning project, enough results from the statewide plan and/or other indicators are sufficient to support renewal.	For a returning project, results from the statewide plan and/or other indicators suggest compelling results in multiple domains.

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
6. Partnerships and Sustainability (10 points maximum)	There is little or no evidence that active partnerships have been formed with organizations or individuals within the proposal and the Memorandum of Understanding	Evidence is provided that the lead organization has plans to collaborate with a variety of partners and providers and/or individuals through the proposal and the Memorandum of Understanding	The proposal and the Memorandum of Understanding includes a variety of partners that are involved in the planning and delivery of the program in specific ways that are not listed or add to the template.
	There is limited substance as to what partners will each contribute to the program or how they will support the project	The partner agreements and contributions are clear and in line with what would be expected/leveraged from the community	The agreement is robust, and partners all contribute substantially to the success of the program
	Limited specifics are articulated on how the program will be sustained and the basic plan is weak	The plan involves a variety of sources that are realistic and achievable	A detailed plan is in place with specifics that are realistic and achievable and can be implemented in a timely manner
	For returning applicants: A detailed plan is in place with specifics that are realistic and achievable. Past sustainability results are appropriate and acceptable	For returning applicants: A detailed plan is in place with specifics that are realistic and achievable and can be implemented quickly: Past sustainability results are excellent and meet the competitive average	For returning applicants: A detailed plan is in place with specifics that are realistic and achievable and can be implemented quickly. Past sustainability results are exemplary, diverse, and significantly exceed the norm
7. Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points maximum)	Costs are not clear and do not relate explicitly to the proposal design	The costs are reasonable, balanced, and for the most part tied to the proposal design	The budget is reasonable, clear, and convincing, per participant costs are within guidelines and the budget can successfully and reasonably implement the proposed plan.
	Some costs may not be reasonable or necessary	Some detail may be missing from the budget narrative to understand how funds will be expended, but the information is clear on the whole	Costs are reasonable and necessary. Administration and direct instruction are balanced, and the budget has compelling specificity for each section

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
Budget and Budget Narrative (Continued)	The narrative is missing essential information to make a full assessment	Costs are well designed, reasonable, and necessary, but a few items may need more information and are not explicitly explained in the narrative	The budget narrative is clear and convincing and has a high level of detail giving the reader a high degree of confidence in the proposal

Appendix N - Tips

	Information - Tips
First Steps repeating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine Eligibility. • Review Requirements and Expectations. • Ask difficult questions. • Assess readiness at the system and site level (use the readiness assessment) and only apply for community sites that are ready and align to funding expectations. • Create a local team to implement the process. • Involve key players from the school and community. • Identify the team leader and writer with the needed skills. • Organize multiple planning meetings to prepare the application and project. • Survey students, parents, and other stakeholders; document and file independent schools and community notice requirements. • Allow plenty of time to prepare your proposal carefully and thoughtfully. Do not rush through the process.
General Presentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use plain English. Include a mixture of bullets, charts, and text. If you can't make a point in less than 35 words, the point needs to be rethought. • Follow the formatting guidelines carefully and precisely. • Avoid cluttering text area boxes with text, using several different fonts, spacing text erratically, and inserting pictures or symbols. • Check and test GMS formatting including cutting and pasting from web based or other platforms well in advance.
General Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure that your narrative makes clear the proposal's vision quickly or you may lose the reader. • Clarity is brevity. Every sentence should say something needed and relevant to the question.
Do not make these mistakes others have made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied when the site(s) was not ready. • Omitted statistical data to back assertions throughout the proposal. • Expansion: Making clear using numbers the difference between existing programs versus proposed expansion including an explanation of the nature of expansion. • Used google docs or other shared internet tools where last-minute consolidation and formatting within GMS was very difficult and impacted the scoring.

	Information - Tips
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tried to work around the narrative guidelines. The rules are there for equity and fairness for all, and they are checked. • Forgot to manually count that the 70,000 character limit was not exceeded.
Section 1: Planning and Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a sufficient level of detail to demonstrate that a wide variety of partners were involved in the planning process, list names and titles and dates of work. Include summarized totals at the bottom of the chart. • Historical planning data with average hours: Funded proposals - 62 hours (range 19-107), Unfunded - 16 hours (range 7-26) • If a rushed last-minute proposal is submitted without team input and the communities are not ready, do not submit. • Do not use a paid grant writer.
Section 2: Program Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include clear bulleted data points that cogently make the case based on objective data. • The answers to this section cannot exceed 10000 characters: use narrative that only adds value to the objective data. • Make clear why the proposed program is needed and how afterschool and summer programs are a solution to the identified need. • Complete a survey and compile the results. • Show data on how the project or community has made progress in meeting the needs of the youth and community and that the proposal will build on that success. • Use the resources AOE shares during applicant meetings. • Be mindful to only submit attachments that add value, do not submit computer generated data sheets with duplicative or generic data that does not connect to the proposal.
Section 3: Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the whole proposal or this section with a short, concise “overview” introduction. Include program locations, numerical information, and programming highlights that will meet identified needs. • Include a schedule in the site tab with at least: school dismissal time, snack and outdoor time, program blocks, program end time, pick up/transportation schedules, differentiated choices. • Include components that have 4:1 staffing or better. Include wages that will attract high quality staff. • Visit an existing program. • Take the time to analyze and think about the importance of design in the following areas: programs, schedules, transitions, space, meals, staff, end products, celebrations, and performances. • Attachments can be used for site specific details and programming info for multi-site projects.

	Information - Tips
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use at least short program descriptions, not single words, or short phrases to describe programs. • Consider alternative models and approaches that can complement and extend a “traditionally designed” afterschool program.
Section 4 Program management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include reference to a clear governance structure or advisory team and a schedule for meetings and oversight. • Make sure the job, hours and salary are clearly articulated. Include sustainability tasks and instructional leadership as an integral part of the Project Director job. • Project Director membership on the school administrative team is strongly recommended. • Include strategies to communicate directly with students and parents as well as more general communication strategies. • Transportation “must be addressed” by law. Explore the opportunities of car-pooling as well as extra school bus runs or adapting existing bus schedules. • Volunteers can support a strong structure but are not to be a relied upon for core staff of a 21c funded program.
Section 5: Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include SMART goals that answer the question: “How is anyone better off?” • Use “SMART” Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) SMART Criteria Wikipedia. Limit the number of goals/objectives to those that leverage or go above and beyond state and federal indicators. Choose a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments. Include short and longer-term objectives.
Section 6: Partnerships and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List past sustainability and partnership successes. • Review multiple existing sustainability plans and other provided statewide data. the 21c statewide funding spreadsheet. • Only complete one Memorandum of Understanding per application and edit and cut down the provided template as needed; less is more. • Attach a sustainability chart as an appendix. Sample Sustainability plans exist on the Vermont Afterschool Wiki.
Section 7: Budget and budget narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For program expansions: Include program name, program site, numbers served and other outcome data for both “pre and post application. Provide new projected numbers served and/or the explanation of the nature of a program expansion. • Use the budget template provided by VTAE. • Include clear formulas that match the numbers and any narrative such as $\\$22 \times 8 \text{ hours} \times 25 \text{ days} = \\4400 • Do request what is needed to achieve goals. The appropriate amount within the listed ranges on page is largely a function of program size and scope.

	<p>Information - Tips</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do make sure all costs are <i>reasonable, necessary, and allocable</i> to carry out your project. Be specific about how the funds will be used and check all of your budget to make sure each item is linked somewhere to your program narrative. • Do submit budgets in even dollars; never use cents. • Do include significant detail in the budget narrative including a brief explanation and a calculation for each item. • Do have a third party check the math and assumptions carefully. • Do include FICA (.0765) for all staff. • Do make sure costs for administration and direct instruction are balanced with not more than 30-40% of the budget for start-up projects allocated toward administration. • Do have per participant cost be between \$900-\$1800 (statewide average is \$1271), or \$2000-\$3500 (statewide average is \$3009) per regular attendee; those being served for 90+ hours. (in the three research-based hour bands) backing out food, tutoring and transportation costs) • Do only propose programs that meet full comprehensive center guidelines. • Do propose funds to support licensed teacher and equivalent staff. • Up to 2% for staff development is recommended, in addition to paid time for trainings. • Up to 5% for supplies is suggested. • One time equipment purchases should be limited to only items related directly to program needs. • Transportation is allowable and by law transportation must be addressed for all youth. • Provide appropriate wages for leadership. • Include wages for licensed teacher (and equivalent) component(s) and include the retirement contribution of ~18%. • In the rare event that an applicant subgrants a significant portion of their budget, specific additional detail within appendix J may be needed to meet “allocability,” that is, specificity on how funds are being spent. Non- allocable funding is not acceptable per federal rules. Be sure to contact AOE for assistance well in advance of submission if this scenario applies or may apply to you. • Do not request funds for "miscellaneous" or other purposes using vague language. • Do not request funds for anything that is not directly related to the 21st Community Learning Centers program described in the narrative. • Do not request funds for construction projects.

	Information - Tips
Last Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proofread your proposal. Ask colleagues who have not been involved in the proposal’s development to proofread the proposal. Reviewers will not give your proposal the benefit of the doubt if information is missing, if spelling errors change the meaning of sentences, or if information is presented in a confusing manner. • Check the budget figures for consistency and accuracy. • Use the checklist printed in the application package to ensure that all required information is included. • Finalize signatures and pages needed in the process well in advance. • Become trained with the GMS well in advance of the deadline and submit before the deadline (January 31 recommended) to avoid any technical pitfalls which can happen. The process for GMS submission includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grant coordinator completes the application and clicks Consistency Check on the Submit tab; if no errors found, it goes to superintendent or CEO ○ Business manager completes review of application including budgets ○ Superintendent or CEO agrees to assurances in the application and inputs data on <u>two</u> different tabs ○ Superintendent or CEO clicks Legal Entity; Agrees on the assurance’s summary page • Superintendent or CEO clicks Submit to AOE on the Submit tab