

FY21 Planning Guidance for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs

Purpose

This communication highlights general planning guidance for 21st CCLC (21C) funded programs as they plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

21st CCLC General Expectations

- **Start Date:** Programs should carefully consider their program start dates, including considering if there are needed delays that are prudent in order to assure maximum safety, quality and completion of any new needed training of staff prior to program opening. Any program start needs to be able to implement current and on-going guidance as well as have enough time to execute plans as a result of local district and school reopening decisions that may affect afterschool operations. The start date should be when the project is safe and ready to start.
- **Contingency Planning:** Programs should be planning for a variety of programming options for in-person as well as viable remote or hybrid/blended options that may be potentially deployed across the year in concert with local school district decisions. Planning for programs that can occur inside the school, outside at the school or in the community, or at home are all viable options for program activity.

21C Legislative Purpose: Allowable Uses and Vision

It is particularly important to maintain clarity on the purpose and use of funds and programming in order to make effective and sustainable leadership decisions.

[SEC. 4201. PURPOSE; DEFINITIONS.](#)

“(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

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact:

Emanuel Betz, Student Pathways Division, Emanuel.Betz@vermont.gov or 802-828-6977

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

Projects may provide activities detailed in 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.

Program Timing

- Consider creative programming options at alternative times, including asynchronous activity outside of traditional afterschool hours. This could include during mornings, evenings, weekends (such as Saturday programs), and vacation periods.
- Consider groups or pods, including hybrid models that are organized based on a content or a club focus, particularly for older youth (art, music, literacy, leadership, STEM, sports, tutoring, activism), but with open flexibility over longer periods of time to include other engaging and necessary program components.
- If youth are not at school for in-person programming full time, but are at home for remote learning that is considered school due to an adapted schedule (e, g. a weekday afternoon), 21C-funded programs may run programs for youth at that time, provided that programs compliment and do not duplicate the school day program or that they do not conflict with the school day remote learning schedule(s).

Flexible Program Types

- Consider innovative youth-family based programming and commensurate systems that may occur primarily outside of the school, that are project-, goal- or challenge-oriented, and that offer the ability to work towards achieving personalized or collective goals by individuals, families or teams of youth.

Accountability

- Maximum flexibility will continue to be applied within the 21C framework and rules. The AOE will work with projects to achieve the best possible outcomes following the reasonable and necessary expenditure framework. Maintaining or nearly maintaining the total numbers of program days in approved applications remains a baseline goal. Any adaptations can be proposed as a change of scope amendment at any time. Flexibility tied to local capacity and the goal to only execute safe, high-quality and sustainable programming can be expected.
- Documentation of plans using 21C amendments: Any updated budget or known changes of scope to the project should be submitted at least one week prior to the first day of fall programming following the same format and process as completed earlier this year for summer programming within the [GMS system](#). This format includes known changes to the current award in the following areas: rationale, alignment to school day systems, programming, safety, staffing and management, evaluation, access and equity, and budget. As before, known changes should remain concise, in short bullet form.
- Any amendments for program expansion will be reviewed with a high degree of scrutiny to assure that capacity, quality, and sustainability are met.

Access and Equity

- The availability and access to 21C-funded programming shall be made equitably to all youth in the community, consistent with standard 21C practice. If any youth who are deemed children of “essential workers” are served from 21C-funded communities, their admission and participation to programs should be treated consistently with the purpose of 21C programs and no differently from any other participant. This statement assumes there is a lack of any major reemergence of COVID-19 or “hot spot” that would require a statewide or localized emergency response to serve and protect the whole community.
- If program income is collected, all programs are open to all youth and no one will be turned away for inability to pay. In times of economic hardship, additional attention to detail in program income practice and in public communications is expected due to conditions created by COVID-19. Further, Project Directors are encouraged to carefully review any site coordinator-generated communications that relate to access and program income specifically. The AOE has reviewed submitted brochures in July and provided targeted feedback when deemed necessary regarding program income.

Budget

- Costs should be made in a reasonable, necessary and sustainable manner to implement on-going high-quality programming for the entire grant period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.
- While past regular attendee cost ranges listed in the 21C handbook and past grant competitions may effectively inform project expenditure and planning, they will be used as a comparative reference point for the purposes of accountability and oversight until revised data becomes available.

Leadership, Staffing and Self-Care for Quality

- Projects should maintain approaches that allow for adequate vacation time to be taken in order to recharge, mitigate burnout, and sustain program quality over the whole year.
- Leaders should contact the 21C State Coordinator immediately if experiencing any challenges or concerns about 21C systems or expectations as it relates to program and grant policy to reduce any unnecessary stress.
- Take time on weekends, or outside of work hours, or at regular determined intervals to power off from technology as it relates to work.
- Take advantage of the mutual social/emotional/wellness benefit provided to staff and youth alike by holding high-quality programs outside and in nature.
- See more tips on [educator self-care](#) (4/23) and [administrator self-care](#) (5/6)

Future Agency Guidance and Home Pages

Programs are encouraged to review the State of Vermont websites below regularly for updated information before and during the reopening period. Updated guidance and answers to questions may be posted at these links in the future as they become available. The Vermont Department of Health and AOE guidance for schools should be used to guide your planning, however the AOE encourages 21C projects to reach out directly to Emanuel Betz at emanuel.betz@vermont.gov when seeking to talk through and/or problem-solve scenarios related to 21C projects and your community's unique needs.

- [AOE COVID-19 Guidance for Vermont Schools](#)
 - [Continuity of Learning](#)
 - [Strong and Healthy Start](#)
- [Vermont Department of Health Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs](#)