

SECTION G-A: OVERVIEW OF THE 21st CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS (21st CCLC) GRANT PROGRAM

A-1: How has the program changed?

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* made several significant changes to the 21st CCLC program. These changes ensure that the program focuses on helping children in high-need schools succeed academically through the use of scientifically-based practice and extended learning time. The new statute provides additional State and local flexibility in how funds can be used to support higher academic achievement, and dramatically expands eligibility for 21st CCLC funding to public and private educational and youth-serving organizations.

Changes to the program's authorizing statute include:

- ◆ **Implementing activities based on rigorous scientific research.** For the first time, the new authorizing statute provides *principles of effectiveness* to guide local grantees in identifying and implementing programs and activities that can directly enhance student learning. These activities must address the needs of the schools and communities, be continuously evaluated using performance measures, and - if appropriate - be based on scientific research.
- ◆ **Focusing services on academic enrichment opportunities.** Under the new legislation, grantees must provide academic enrichment activities to students in high-poverty schools to help them meet State and local standards in the core content areas such as reading, math, and science. In addition, applicants must also provide services to the families of children who are served in the program. Under the previous statute, grantees provided a broad array of services to children and community members. The new legislation allows community learning centers to serve adult family members of students, but not community members at large.
- ◆ **Transferring program administration from the Federal to the State level.** The new legislation turns over responsibility for administering the 21st CCLC program to the State educational agency (SEA) in each State. The USDOE will allocate funds to the SEAs by formula. The SEA will manage grant competitions and award grants to eligible organizations for local programs. States now will be accountable to the USDOE for ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. Under the previous legislation, the USDOE managed a nationwide competition and directly awarded over 1,600 grants to public schools and school districts that worked in collaboration with other public and nonprofit organizations, agencies, and educational entities.
- ◆ **Expanding eligibility to additional entities.** The new legislation allows public and private organizations to receive funds directly from the State under this program. Under the previous authority, only public schools or local educational agencies could directly receive grants. The USDOE continues to strongly encourage all applicants to collaborate with other public and private agencies, including the local school districts, to create programs as comprehensive and high-quality as possible.
- ◆ **Targeting services to poor and low-performing schools.** The new legislation requires States to award grants only to applicants that will primarily serve students who attend schools with a high concentration of poor students. In addition, States must give

priority to applications for projects that will serve children in schools designated as in need of improvement under Title I and that are submitted jointly by school districts receiving Title I funds, and community-based organizations or public or private organizations. These priorities are new. The previous legislation restricted eligibility to inner-city or rural schools and strongly encouraged schools to collaborate with community-based organizations.

- ◆ **Extending the duration of grant awards.** States now have the discretion to award grants to local organizations for a period of three to five years. The previous law limited the duration of the grants to three years.
- ◆ **Increasing accountability at the State and local levels.** The new legislation requires States to develop performance indicators and performance measures that they can use to evaluate programs and activities. States must require local grantees to implement programs that meet the *principles of effectiveness*. In addition, grantees must periodically evaluate their programs to assess progress toward achieving the goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment.
- ◆ **Expanding the range of locations in which local programs may take place.** The new legislation provides support for services for children and their families in elementary or secondary schools or in any other location that is at least as available and accessible as the school. The previous legislation allowed for community learning centers to be located only in public elementary or secondary schools.
- ◆ **Requiring funds to supplement and not supplant.** Grantees must use program funds to supplement and not supplant other Federal, State, and local funds. This "supplement not supplant" provision was not included in the previous statute.
- ◆ **Allowing States to require a local match.** States may now require local grantees to match funds. Under the previous law no match was required.

A-2: What is the relationship between the 21st CCLC and other Federal programs?

The 21st CCLC serves as a supplementary program that can enhance State or local reform efforts to improve student academic achievement and to support their overall development. In particular, 21st CCLC funds will create and expand afterschool programs that offer extended learning opportunities for children and their families. Once these programs have been established with 21st CCLC funds, other Federal, State, or local funds can also be used to provide activities and services in these centers. Some illustrative examples of how 21st CCLC programs can operate in conjunction with other Federal programs to meet mutual goals and provide additional resources to target populations are provided below.

Experience & Practice #1: Relationship Between 21st CCLC and Other Federal Programs

Title I funds, in concert with the 21st CCLC program funds, can provide extended learning programs in schools that integrate enrichment and recreation opportunities with academic services. 21st CCLC program funds can also meet the needs of parents seeking supplemental educational services (such as tutoring and academic enrichment) for their children. Local 21st CCLC programs may also work in collaboration with programs to supplement services to target populations such as migrant students.

Other Federal programs can also complement local 21st CCLC programs. Many current 21st CCLC programs are eligible to receive funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service for "Afterschool Snacks," and in some cases to provide supper to young children. Local communities can also participate in USDA's Summer Food Service program. These snacks and meals can contribute to the nutritional services provided in local programs. Services made available through funds from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) can be combined with 21st CCLC programs to serve children outside of the regular school day. 21st CCLC programs can also utilize Federal funding available through local prevention grants under Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the U.S. Department of Justice). Further information on local prevention grants can be found on the OJJDP website, <http://www.ncjrs.org>

In no case, however, may 21st CCLC funds supplant other Federal, State or local funds.

Experience & Practice #2: Staff Development

To sustain a quality program, staff, paraprofessionals and volunteers who will be delivering academic support and enrichment services should be provided with ongoing training and learning opportunities, both to ensure that they interact appropriately with students, and also to prevent high rates of student turnover. Staff training should focus on how to work with children, how to negotiate, and how to address the needs of children of different ages, races, cultures, and disabilities. Training can also give staff ideas for enrichment and hands-on activities, greater expertise in academic subject matter, knowledge in assessing student progress, and strategies for implementing the different program components of academics, enrichment, and recreation.