

Issue Date: February 27, 2024

Nita M. Lowey 21ST Century Community Learning Centers

Title IV Part B

Purpose

Federal funding for before school, afterschool, and summer, as part of *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), is delivered through the Vermont Agency of Education. The program focuses on supporting diverse and engaging educational programming for k-12 youth and families, including tutoring for youth in high poverty communities with demonstrated academic and family need. To be most effective and sustainable, programs align and strategically integrate school system practices such as in the areas of professional development, positive behavioral approaches, inclusionary practices, and food while building afterschool and summer programs that enhance opportunities, promote growth, and demonstrate learning and other gains. Schools, in partnership with hundreds of community providers, deliver programming.

Legislation

- Designed for initiation or expansion of programming during non-school hours.
- 14 allowable uses include well-rounded education programs and activities (enrichment) in core content areas, tutoring, technology, arts and music, structured physical activity, work-based learning, and parent involvement.
- Funds are competitive and awarded through a review process. Single and multi-site projects of up to nine centers exist.
- Investments are for five years with declining award amounts after year 3. Renewal is possible and occurs for high quality projects. Returning grantees are expected to meet up to 50% sustainability from other funding sources.
- There is a \$50,000 minimum award amount. The annual allocation for grant investments has been ~5.8 million.
- Services are for k-12 with a focus on regular attendance in high quality programs.
- Best practices, research-based, including evidence-based programming expected.

Current Requirements and Key Expectations

- Eligibility determined by community at 40% free reduced lunch or Title 1 Schoolwide plan eligible.
- School and community partners provide services.
- Must be a *Full Comprehensive Center* (quantity, quality, and depth of programming)
- Programs must complement, but not duplicate, the school day.
- 30-hour minimum Project Director required to implement and sustain quality programs



Representative Annual 22-23 data

- 11,171 students served.
- 5554 “regular attendees,” those served in research based hour bands of 90+ hours
- 1,417,916 total student hours completed: analogous to one school district of 1000 youth served for a full year and summer.
- 86 school-based centers (100 is historical average)
- 34% of Vermont public schools are funded.
- Afterschool program averages: 178 days, 553 hours of program service
- Summer program averages: 27 days in summer, 7 hours daily
- Minimum of 49% of regular attendees are low-income (60% is the historical average)
- 21% of regular attendees are on Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Regular attendees attend school more on average (3 fewer in-school absences for secondary youth, 2 for elementary aged children) (historical data)
- 92% Project Directors with B.A. or higher (21-22 data)
- 593 Licensed teachers as staff (21-22 data)
- 24% of regular attendees with data had SBAC reading scores (and 17% for math) go from not proficient to proficient or above (pre-pandemic data)

A Successful and Tested Vermont System

- Started by Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords in 1997 based on local models where school buildings and their resources were opened afterschool, with community members and organizations partnering to support diverse afterschool programming and approaches.
- State level support systems have been honed and improved over 20 years:
 - Robust grant competition system exists including an e-system aligned to state budget requirements with high quality and sustainability embedded.
 - Peer informed state driven accountability systems (site visits/action planning)
 - Statewide evaluation plan and robust use of data for reporting and improvement
 - External contract for (e.g.) professional development, assessment, programming, and leadership support
- An effective investing model for Vermont youth in the “third space”
 - System design and rules support high quality sustainable programming.
 - 21C investment doubled annually with 6.4 million in new funds (53% of total)
 - Grant competitions fund new, old, and expansion sites within competitions.
 - Complex integration built to address (e.g.) food, program, and social needs.
 - Model builds and supports child-care development: one-third of centers are licensed providers.
 - The model is scalable and flexible; systems are adaptable.

Resource: [21st-century-community-learning-centers-pandemic-evaluation-2020-2022](#)