

Issue Date: October 24, 2024

# Program Track - State Afterschool Grant Application Planning Guide

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## I. General Information

**Due Date:** December 5, 2024

**Timeline:**

Program Track Application and Guide (Paper)	Oct 21, 2024
GMS Application Opens (Online)	Oct 21, 2024
Application Review + Training	Nov 6, 2024
Technical Assistance	Ongoing
Application Closes	December 5, 2024
Award Announcements	January 15, 2025
Programs Start	January 15, 2025

**Program:** Act 78 (2023) 16 V.S.A. § 4018. Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs.

**Funding Period:** January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028.

**Contact List:**

All potential applicants interested in receiving regular communications related to this grant program can request to be added to an e-mail listserv. To be added to this list and to facilitate on-going communication, please complete this [Contact Form](#). Completing the contact form does not commit interested parties to completing an application.

**Statutory Language:** [16 V.S.A. §4018](#)

**Background:**

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) invites public, private, and non-profit organizations to apply for state grant funding appropriated under [Act 78](#) of 2023 for the purpose of providing and expanding access to high-quality afterschool learning opportunities for all Vermont students. Throughout this grant application, we use the broad term “afterschool” or “afterschool program” as defined in the 2021 [Universal Afterschool Task Force Report](#) (referred to as Task Force Report) to refer to “[...] a structured program serving children and youth on a regular basis anytime outside the school day and over the summer. This can include academic, enrichment and family engagement activities and programs that can occur before school, afterschool, on weekends and evenings, and during the summer and school vacations” (p. 20) (See also **Appendix A**).

As outlined in Act 78 and informed by recommendations from the [Universal Afterschool Task Force](#) created with the passage of [Act 154 of 2020](#), the Task Force Report, and the [VT Guidelines for Afterschool, Summer, and Youth Development Programs](#), eligible applicants are invited to develop new or expand existing afterschool programs to increase equity and access to high-quality afterschool programs (see **Appendix C**).

Interested applicants should consider ways they might use this funding to “[...]elevate youth voice and engagement; support working families; provide enrichment and learning experiences; build protective factors; support social-emotional learning, youth mental health, and well-being; and keep children and youth from kindergarten through high school healthy and safe” (Task Force Report, p. 20).

Applicants are encouraged to consider ways Act 78 grant applications might support or sustain existing afterschool and expanded and enriched learning goals for their community. Importantly, there are valuable opportunities to align these aims with several education initiatives in Vermont that encourage partnerships between schools and community-based partners and organizations such as [ESSA Title IVB \(the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs \(21C\)\)](#), [Act 67 Community Schools Act](#), [Flexible Pathways Initiative \(Act 77\)](#), and other local initiatives. These opportunities for alignment can significantly increase the reach and impact of multiple funded initiatives, and support sustainability of afterschool programs across the state over time.

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

In the interest of keeping this grant program relevant and maximally effective over the course of its life, the AOE anticipates engaging in multiple design cycles. We anticipate revisions and/or refinements to the design of the application based on need and performance data over time.

### **Eligible Applicants:**

Per Sec. E.500.1 16 V.S.A. § 4018 was added to read:

#### **§ 4018. AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS**

- (a) Education Fund grants in an amount equal to the receipts from the sales and use tax imposed by 32 V.S.A. chapter 233 on retail sales of cannabis or cannabis products in this State, net of any administrative costs per subsection (b)(4) of this section, shall be used to fund grant programs for the expansion of summer and afterschool programs with an emphasis on increasing access in underserved areas of the State.*
- (b) The Secretary of Education shall administer the grant programs, as follows:*

(1) *Grants shall be used to support a mixed delivery system for afterschool and summer programming. Eligible recipients can be public, private, or nonprofit organizations.*

The funds for the Program Track - State Afterschool Grant are made available to *public, private, or nonprofit organizations*. Funds for successful applicants will be made available in January 2025.

Entities that wish to apply, but do not currently have accounts in the VT AOE Grants Management System, should follow the guide on **Appendix E**. All the questions an applicant will be expected to answer are provided in **Appendix G** to allow you to begin working while you go through the process of enrolling in GMS. These questions are provided as a support only, all applications must be submitted through the GMS. Applications will not be accepted in any other format.

**Award Amounts and Duration:**

This grant is designed to support the development and expansion of individual programs, either as new stand-alone initiatives or additions to existing centers. Award requests may range from \$15,000 to \$60,000 annually, depending on the proposal's scope. The Agency of Education has allocated approximately \$630,000 per year to this track. The grant period runs from January 2025 to June 2028, allowing grantees to begin as soon as a fully executed grant agreement is in place. Approved grantees will be notified by January 15th, 2025. The funding provided between January 2025 and June 2025 will be a 50% prorated amount based on the annual award amount requested. Subsequent years will follow the state July-June fiscal calendar.

The table below provides a high-level comparative summary of the different quality criteria and budgetary estimates to support afterschool program or center development. The column describing the [21CCLC](#) grant program is included as a basis for comparison and to demonstrate a potential option or “next step” for awardees who seek to develop comprehensive centers to consider.

For additional information on afterschool funding options and a narrative guide for which might be appropriate for your situation, see **Appendix B**.

**Table 1: Comparative Summary of AOE Competitive Grants Available to Support Afterschool**

	<b>Act 78 Program Grant Option</b>	<b>Act 78 Center Grant Option</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers</b>
<b>Readiness/ Capacity Level and Design Approach</b>	For immediate implementation of new or expanded programs	For building capacity and readiness to start <i>one</i> comprehensive center within one year	For higher levels of capacity and readiness to start and sustain a comprehensive center or centers
<b>Size and Scope</b>	Supports evidence-based expansions and smaller pilot programs	Supports single-site, multi-program centers in the start-up phase	Supports evidence-based full comprehensive centers from inception
<b>Eligibility</b>	Public, private, and non-profit organizations	Public, private, and non-profit organizations	Public, private, and non-profit partners; only Title I/Schoolwide Plan eligible communities may apply

	<b>Act 78 Program Grant Option</b>	<b>Act 78 Center Grant Option</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers</b>
<b>Priorities</b>	Expansion of programing in underserved areas; expansion of programing to students from historically marginalized groups; (HMGs) to develop, expand, or improve existing programs	Expansion of programing in underserved areas; expansion of programing to HMGs; to develop a single-site comprehensive center or transition from single-site or single-program to comprehensive center	Supporting programming in high need communities and secondary programs; focus on initiation expansion, and support for high quality comprehensive programming including multi-site projects
<b>Partnerships between School/ Community/ Partners</b>	Recommended	Required	Required including an MOU
<b>Leadership Requirements</b>	Identified on-site leader demonstrated; leader can fulfil multiple roles	Director-level position required, 30+ hours/week on average; Responsibilities may be split between two people	Director-level position required, 30+ hours/week on average and Site-Based Coordinators
<b>Duration requirements</b>	Flexible; variable duration	100 days in year one with substantial growth annually	150-200+ days including a minimum of 5 weeks summer by year 2
<b>Request For Proposals Release</b>	Mid-October	Mid-October	September 18, 2024

	<b>Act 78 Program Grant Option</b>	<b>Act 78 Center Grant Option</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers</b>
<b>Due Date</b>	Early December	January	January 24, 2025
<b>Planning and Application completion time (range in hours and RFA open period)</b>	Up to 10 hours 1-2 months	Up to 20 hours 1-2 months	50+ hours 4 months
<b>Letter of Intent</b>	No	No	Yes - required to apply
<b>Grant Period</b>	3.5 years with annual performance reviews	3 years with annual performance reviews	5 years with annual performance reviews
<b>Annual Grant Amounts</b>	\$15,000-\$60,000 (annual)	\$50,000-\$150,000 (annual)	\$50,000-\$600,000+ (annual)
<b>Technical Assistance and Support</b>	Focus on annual applications and improvements	Additional targeted supports for this pathway; coordination with 21CCLC initiative in development	Structured application process with ongoing feedback. Regular professional development, leadership meetings, technical assistance, monitoring, assessment and evaluation and data support for grantees

	<b>Act 78 Program Grant Option</b>	<b>Act 78 Center Grant Option</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers</b>
<b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>	Yearly cycle of data collection and site visits	Yearly cycle of data collection and site visits	Yearly cycle of Federal and State data collection and peer review site visits
<b>Sustainability</b>	Transition to local budget, comprehensive afterschool center, 21CCLC, or other funding encouraged	Transition to Local, or 21C standard funding option may be available after year 3 if Title 1/SWP eligibility is met	Built-in processes – 5-year grants with sustainability structure built in; Transition to multiple sources

**II. Requirements and Allowable Uses**

**Absolute Priorities**

Listed below are the absolute priority areas identified by the Agency to meet the goals of Act 78 and as informed by the Task Force Report that made recommendations related to the design of a state Afterschool Grant Program. There are three primary areas of overlap that we have identified as absolute priorities.

<b>Universal Task Force Report</b>	<b>Act 78 Legislative Language</b>
<i>Partnerships: Community and school partnerships are essential to diversify resources and provide more sustainability. The grant process should include a requirement or priority for organizations working with school and community partners. (p.23)</i>	<i>Grants shall be used to support a mixed delivery system for afterschool and summer programming. 16. V.S.A. § 4018 (b)(1)</i>



Universal Task Force Report	Act 78 Legislative Language
<p><i>The grant program should expand access for children and youth from historically marginalized groups, support low- and middle-income families, children and youth, and promote programming in underserved areas of the state. (p. 20)</i></p>	<p><i>Grants may be used to directly target communities with low existing capacity to serve youth in afterschool and summer settings. 16. V.S.A. § 4018 (b)(2)</i></p>
<p><i>Grant awards should be prioritized for programs that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Serve low-income and middle-income children and youth</i></li> <li>• <i>Serve underserved areas of the state</i></li> <li>• <i>Serve underserved/marginalized populations</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide access, supports, and accommodations for children and youth with disabilities and/or special needs (p. 22)</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Grants may be used to directly target communities with low existing capacity to serve youth in afterschool and summer settings. V.S.A. § 4018 (b)(3)</i></p>

Applicants must meet **all three** of the absolute priorities defined below. They must demonstrate meeting:

***Absolute Priority 1:*** The Agency of Education will prioritize awards for applications that **utilize school-community partnership model** (see **Appendix A**) to deliver programming.

***Absolute Priority 2:*** The Agency of Education will prioritize awards for applications where **there is evidence of no or limited afterschool program options currently available** for children and youth in the applicant community(s).

***Absolute Priority 3:*** The Agency of Education will prioritize awards to applications **designed to improve access and remove barriers to participation for students from Historically Marginalized Groups** (see **Appendix A**).

**Requirements**

***Applications from the same entity:*** Eligible entities may submit only one application per grant track (i.e., one Program Track application and one Center Track application.). Entities who received funding through previous rounds of State Afterschool Grants are eligible to apply in this round provided they meet all other qualifications.

**Costs:** No costs related to the preparation of the application may be part of a proposal. State funds may not be used for indirect costs.

**Anti-discrimination statutes:** Consistent with recommendations from the 2021 Task Force Report (pp. 21-22), grant-funded programs and activities must conform to state and federal legislation governing the administration/use of public dollars as well as state and federal anti-discrimination statutes.

**Disabilities:** Programs must meet the requirements of [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), [the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#), [the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004](#), and the Vermont State Public Accommodations Act ([9 V.S.A. § 4501](#) & [9 V.S.A. § 4502](#).) as applicable. 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.

**Location of Programs:** Over the course of its delivery, a program or its activities may require the use of more than one site or the use of partner sites. However, all awarded applicant sites and partner sites should meet the following criteria outlined in the [Vermont Guidelines for Afterschool, Summer and Youth Development Programs](#) Guiding Principle on healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate environments for children and youth.

- Program has clear policies and procedures in place to protect the safety of all children, youth, and staff, including abuse prevention and reporting training, background checks for staff and volunteers, and fingerprint authorizations when required.
- Program's participants are appropriately supervised during all program activities.
- Program provides all children and youth opportunities for dynamic physical activity daily.
- Program ensures all meals and snacks provided by the program are healthy, plentiful, and nutritious.
- Program ensures an emotionally safe, welcoming, and supportive environment free from aggression or bullying to protect and support the social and emotional health of all program participants.
- Program's indoor and outdoor spaces are safe, clean, and accessible to all children, youth, and families.

In the instance in which programming may happen at an alternate or partner site the following criteria should be included:

- All parties involved are in agreement on the alternate site;
- A clearly defined plan of communication between the alternate site and the primary organizational center is in place; and

- Safe transportation between the primary site and the alternative site has been arranged (funding for transportation is an allowable grant expense).

*Safety Plan:* Applicants will be expected to provide a copy of a written safety plan for all programs.

*Leadership:* Applicants must have a clearly identified on-site leader who will be responsible for planning and implementation of funded activities. This leader should be supported by a robust multi-stakeholder leadership team.

*Required State Level Evaluation and data in Legislation:* The Agency of Education will be expected to report at a minimum on program and student activities and outcomes data on an annual basis. Consistent with the Task Force Report and in accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 4018, applicants will need to meet the following reporting requirements in accordance with AOE standards.

- [Demographic data](#)
- Child and youth outcome data
- Children, youth, family, and community partner feedback
- Data from program quality assessments, such as the Youth Program Quality Assessment Tool developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality or other quality assessment tool proposed by the State
  - Number of programs
  - Location of programs
  - Dosage (of days/week, weeks/year, hours/week)
  - Type/Content of Programs
  - Costs to families
  - Youth Engagement and Leadership
- Program improvement plans including program changes based on child, youth, family and community partner feedback

*Duration:* For individual programs, there is no minimum number of program days required. Award amounts must reflect a reasonable and necessary cost for days of program proposed.

*Fees:* As a publicly administered program, the AOE supports services that are free, in line with legislative intent and Absolute Priority 3 of this grant. For all grant-funded activities and services, no afterschool participant shall be turned away from awarded programs based on economic disadvantage and/or inability to pay. Programs that intend to have a fee structure must demonstrate how they will meet that expectation.

## **Allowable Uses**

Grantees may expend funds within the following list. Funding may only be used to support programs that occur during afterschool hours, as defined above. All costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable. Be advised however, that significant individual

expenses may trigger the public bid requirements of [16 V.S.A. § 559](#) and necessitate additional documentation.

- Staffing and direct service programming for youth;
- Administration and benefits;
- Transportation;
- Equipment and supplies related to programming including food for cooking programs;
- Contracts to support programming;
- Professional development;
- Computers, software and technical services that support evidence-based programming;
- Local evaluation, assessment, and data services;
- Purchase of curricula; and
- Field trips, memberships, and entry fees.

**Examples (non-exhaustive) of allowable afterschool and summer programs:**

- Academic enrichment learning programs, mentoring programs, remedial education activities, and tutoring services, that are aligned with the challenging State academic standards and any local standards; and local curricula that are designed to improve student achievement;
- High impact tutoring program;
- Well-rounded education activities;
- Programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (referred to in this paragraph as “STEAM”), including computer science, and that foster innovation in learning by supporting nontraditional STEAM education teaching methods;
- Literacy education programs, including financial literacy programs and environmental literacy programs;
- Programs that support youth leadership, agency and voice;
- 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;
- Expanded media literacy and library service hours;
- Parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy;
- Counseling programs; and

- 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 supplement the regular academic experiences of participants.

### **III. Grant Award Information**

#### **Selection Process**

All applications will receive an initial eligibility review by AOE staff to ensure that the application was received on time, is complete, and meets all grant requirements. If an application does not meet the requirements, the AOE reserves the right to remove the application from consideration. All applications will then be read, reviewed, and scored by readers with extensive experience in education and/or afterschool programs. Each question can receive points up to 100 total points for the application.

#### **Grant Award Decisions and Disposition of Applications**

The AOE reserves the right to award in part, to reject any applications in whole or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities, or omissions if, in its judgment, the best interest of program participants would be served. After receiving the grant application, the AOE 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 State requirements including equitable distribution of funds. In addition, the AOE reserves the right to change the dollar amount of grant awards.

In the event of a tie score between applicants, the AOE will give preference to the applicant who has demonstrated the higher level of community need.

All awards are subject to availability of funds.

#### **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 and as outlined in the *State Level Evaluation* section above.

A funded applicant must commit to:

1. Participate in statewide evaluation activities conducted by the Vermont Agency of Education.
2. Participate in any desk or site monitoring and associated technical assistance processes.
3. Participate in Agency of Education professional development as required.
4. Applicants may be asked to clarify certain aspects of their applications or meet specific conditions. Finalists may be asked to participate in subsequent activity such as an oral interview or to receive an onsite visit to clarify application information. Applicants will be contacted if such information is necessary.

### **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.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Applicants have the right to appeal the funding decision. 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.

### **Grant Award Period**

The grant award and period of performance will be on an annual basis, with continuation applications available to awarded applicants for up to three years contingent on performance and availability of funds.

## IV. Application Scoring Guide

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
<b>Overall</b>	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
<b>1. Core Capacity and Commitment</b> (10 points maximum)	Team is limited and isolated	A team exists to support the project	A cohesive project team exists including a variety of stakeholders and partners

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
	It is not clear the project has a clearly defined and committed leadership team	There is evidence that the project has a clearly defined and committed leadership team	There is ample evidence that the project has a clearly defined and committed leadership team, and that this team has plans to use the project to implement a broader educational vision
	Resources, funds, systems and initiatives are not evident	There are a number of associated resources, funds, systems and initiatives that can support the project	Resources, funds, systems and initiatives are multi-faceted and will strengthen the project's chance for success
<b>2. Program Need</b> (15 points maximum)	Poverty data averages under 30%	Poverty data averages between 30-45%	Poverty data indicates the greatest need versus other applications
	There may be alternate like opportunities already in the communit(ies)	There may be some alternate options in the community, but strong need is demonstrated	The proposal is for a communit(ies) where this is a new program and/or there are no other afterschool or summer opportunities



Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
	Additional data points related to need do not add much value to the case	Additional data points related to youth and community needs make clear that the proposal is in line with legislative intent	Additional data points related to need demonstrate the highest level of need and relate explicitly to the proposal
<b>3. Program Description and Components</b> (40 points maximum)	Available space and resources are not fully leveraged or missing	Available space and resources can clearly support a quality afterschool program and/or center	There are a great variety of resources available including appropriate and varied buildings and/or other spaces available to the afterschool program and/or center
	It is not clear that the proposal can effectively serve youth with disabilities	Specific strategies are articulated that give the reader confidence that youth with a variety of needs will be effectively served	Both strategies and systems exist and are in place to support all youth including those who may need individual accommodations

<b>Application Section</b>	<b>Basic Response</b>	<b>Better Response</b>	<b>Best Response</b>
	Appropriate sliding scales and associated systems descriptions that should guarantee equity and access raise some questions or concerns due the quality of the information	Sliding scales and/or donation approaches and associated systems provide enough information to assure access and equity for most or all youth and/or children	Equity and access are prioritized: programs are free and/or sliding scale rates are nominal and matched to the community need with associated strategies that support potential challenges to access
	Proposal strategies are unclear or not fully developed	A variety of proposal strategies are proposed and well-designed including effective learning component(s)	Proposal is intentional, well-designed, and purposeful, including opportunities for personalization including a rich variety of explicit strategies and approaches
	Proposal descriptions lack detail	Proposal detail includes and numbers of students served, schedules, days, offerings, sites, ratios, curriculum, rationale, staffing configurations	All proposal details are clearly presented and support other assertions throughout the proposal

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
	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 with advanced training including a number of school day teachers and/or other professionals or content level community experts
	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	The proposal is exciting and engaging. There are ample opportunities for youth to learn, explore, develop and improve
	The leader or director's position is not well-designed, and it is unclear who might fill this need or what their qualifications will be	The leader or 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 leader or 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

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
	Transportation need is not addressed without any reference to data	Transportation is addressed but without a lot of compelling detail	Transportation is addressed and proven as essential and needed to assure access and equity or a rationale for why it is not needed exists
<b>4. Partnerships</b> (10 points maximum)	There is limited partner information relative to other applications	The partner agreements and contributions are clear and in line with what might be expected/leveraged from the community	The partner potential is robust, and partners will substantially contribute to the success of the proposal
<b>5. Outcomes and Goals</b> (10 points maximum)	Items may be missing, unrealistic, vague, and/or not follow a SMART format.	There is enough precision in the numbers to guide and understand what the proposal is meant to achieve	Items are clear, tied to the proposal, and follow a SMART framework  Related: In the best practice/ evidence tab additional research is cited that supports the proposal design

Application Section	Basic Response	Better Response	Best Response
<b>6. Budget</b> (15 Points)	Some costs may not be reasonable or necessary	Some detail may be missing from the budget to understand how funds will be expended, but the information is clear overall	Costs are reasonable and necessary. Administration and direct instruction are balanced, and the budget has compelling specificity and logic for each part
	The narrative is missing essential information to make a full assessment	Costs are well designed, 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

## V. General Writing Tips

All Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the general programmatic guidance in **Appendix C – Elements of High-Quality Afterschool and Summertime Programming** in addition to the specific technical guidance below.

Area	Details
First Steps and General Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the Guide thoroughly.</li> <li>• Review the GMS application when it is released thoroughly.</li> <li>• Determine when and if to apply (attend trainings.)</li> <li>• Use plain English in text area boxes. If you can't make each point in less than 35 words, the point needs to be rethought.</li> <li>• Check and test GMS formatting including cutting and pasting from web based or other platforms well in advance.</li> <li>• Answer questions thoroughly. Do not answer questions in only a few sentences with limited and/or very general information. Answers should be answered at a multiple paragraph level with compelling supporting statements.</li> </ul>
Section 1 Team Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership team members from the school or organization administrative or other related teams is recommended.</li> <li>• Make explicit connections to school or organization-based teams or initiatives that will impact program quality.</li> </ul>
Section 2: Program Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullet data points with very concise narratives. Paragraphs are not desired, just facts.</li> </ul>

Area	Details
Section 3: Program Description Program Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a schedule in the site tab with at least 2-2.5 hours including: local school dismissal time, snack and outdoor time, circle time, program blocks, program end time, pick up/transportation schedules, and differentiated choices.</li> <li>• Propose 4-8 hour daily summer programs for at least 25 days.</li> <li>• Include a variety of program components.</li> <li>• Visit an existing program if possible.</li> <li>• 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, outcomes.</li> <li>• Use at least short program descriptions, not single words or very short phrases to describe programs.</li> <li>• Consider alternative models and approaches that can complement and extend a “traditionally designed” afterschool program.</li> <li>• Make sure the job, hours and salary are clearly articulated. Include management tasks and instructional leadership as an integral part of the leader’s job.</li> <li>• Consider innovative new approaches.</li> </ul>
Section 4. Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any partnership that includes a funding component may need to be delivered via contract.</li> <li>• Clearly articulate all members of any partnership.</li> <li>• Indicate which partnerships are previously existing and which will be new for this proposal.</li> </ul>
Section 5. (Outcomes and Goals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a SMART framework in listing outcomes and goals.</li> </ul>

Area	Details
<p>Section 6: Budget and Budget narrative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete your annual budget and double it for the grant award and required budget tab.</li> <li>• Include clear formulas that match the numbers and any narrative such as \$28 x 2 hours x 25 days= \$1400.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Do submit budgets in even dollars; never use cents.</li> <li>• Do include significant detail in the budget narrative including a brief explanation and a calculation for each item.</li> <li>• Do have a third party check the math and assumptions carefully.</li> <li>• Do include FICA (.0765) for all staff.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Do propose funds to support appropriately credentialed staff.</li> <li>• Up to 2% for staff development is recommended, in addition to paid time for trainings.</li> <li>• Up to 5% for supplies is suggested.</li> <li>• One time equipment purchases should be limited to only items related directly to program needs.</li> <li>• Transportation is allowable and should be carefully considered.</li> <li>• Provide appropriate wages for all staff member.</li> <li>• Include any required retirement costs mandated by the state of Vermont.</li> <li>• Do not request funds for “miscellaneous” or other purposes using vague language.</li> </ul>



Area	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not request funds for anything that is not directly related to the project described in the narrative.</li> </ul>
Last Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the budget figures for consistency and accuracy.</li> <li>Become familiar with the GMS well in advance of the deadline and submit before the deadline to avoid any technical pitfalls, which can happen. The process for GMS submission includes:</li> <li>Grant coordinator completes the application and clicks Consistency Check on the Submit tab; if no errors found, it goes to business manager; you <b>MUST</b> manually notify the business manager.</li> <li>Business manager completes their review of application and submits.</li> <li>Superintendent or CEO agrees to assurances in the application and inputs data on <u>two</u> different tabs.</li> <li>Superintendent or CEO clicks Entity; agrees on the assurance's summary page.</li> <li>Superintendent or CEO clicks Submit to AOE on the Submit tab.</li> </ul>

## **VI. Contact Information**

Visit the competition [website](#).

Contacts:

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# Appendices

## Appendix A - Definitions

*School-Community Partnership:* A formal agreement between a local school and an entity from its community that share responsibility for delivery of programming and its intended results in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. For applicants without partner organizations in reasonable geographic proximity or of sufficient quality, an individual or organized group of individuals can also be a partner. Members of the partnership may divide management and delivery responsibilities as most appropriate for their circumstances, but all included partners are bound to the same terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

*Afterschool:* A generic term denoting a period of time when a structured program for k-12 youth occurs outside of typical school hours. This can include activities and programs that may occur before school, after school, on weekends, during the summer, or other school vacations periods. A lesser-used synonym is Out of School Time (OST) programming.

*Comprehensive Afterschool Center:* A substantial selection of afterschool program options (see below) that occur throughout the school year and summer. A center typically needs a centralized brick and mortar location but is not defined solely by that facility. For additional information refer to the chart in the Additional Resources section of this application.

*Afterschool Program:* Unique courses, activities, and events that are offered within or in partnership with a larger organizational structure. Afterschool Programs rely on an external entity (e.g., school or community organization) to provide leadership, logistics, and sustainability.

*Historically Marginalized Groups:* As defined in the [ESSA Vermont State Plan](#), Historically Marginalized Students are, "...those students who have been historically underserved by educational institutions for any one, or more than one, characteristic including ethnic and racial minorities, English Learners, students with Free and Reduced Lunch, students with disabilities, and students who are migrant, foster, or homeless." The specific groups identified should not be understood to be an exhaustive list, readers should also reference the language of the 2021 [Universal Afterschool Task Force Report](#) and use the [VT AOE Equity Lens Tool](#).

*Mixed Delivery System:* Mixed Delivery System (MDS) is a term of art traditionally used in the early childcare space and is language included in Act 78. According to the Childcare Technical Assistance Network, and as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), mixed delivery describes a system of early childhood care and education services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings (such as Head Start, licensed family, and center-based child care programs, public schools, and community-based organizations) and is supported with a combination of public and private funds. In Afterschool programming, this terminology is not commonly

used. Throughout this grant application, we will use the language of Partners and Partnership to express the intent of flexibility of provider and location and collaboration.

*Technical Assistance:* Non-programmatic services that directly support the stated goals of the afterschool and summer program. For example: assessment, evaluation, or training in service to the program(s).

*Program Implementation:* Expenses that support and/or result in direct services and outcomes for youth. For example: staffing costs, purchase of equipment or supplies, or entry fees for an event.

*Program Expansion:* A quantitative articulated numerical increase above an existing baseline. For example: days of service provided, average daily attendance, or number of unique program offerings.

*Program Sustainability:* Activities that build and maintain existing high-quality programs. For example: supporting existing evidence or data proven high-quality programming, leadership, professional development, specific research-based quality initiatives such as Positive Behavioral Supports or the Youth Program Quality Assessment System

## **Appendix B – Funding decision narrative support**

### **Why might we pursue a single afterschool program?**

- We would like to propose a 5-8 week summer-only program.
- We would like to expand a successful school day initiative into out of school time.
- We would like to initiate a specific innovative program.
- We would like to initiate or expand a work-based learning program for high school students.
- We have an existing program or center, and we want to add a strong enrichment program and/or a tutoring option that is tied into our MTSS system.
- We have a large existing program with multiple sites, and we would like to enhance our data, evaluation, or professional development options to meet the current needs of our students and available staff.
- Our afterschool offerings are very limited to non-existent, and we would like to start some high-quality high impact single type enrichment or tutoring offerings that may also include movement and food across 10-20 weeks. We would like to eventually grow this into a full comprehensive center over time.

### **Why might we pursue an Afterschool Center?**

- We need an appropriate alternative path during the start-up year(s) building out from a smaller afterschool center up to a bigger one over time.
- We have wanted to start a comprehensive program for years but have not had a funding stream. This pathway can get us started.
- We are a small school and/or community, and this track and application makes sense for us.
- Our organization(s) has capacity but may need a modified timeline to get to a fully comprehensive center.

### **Why might I choose 21C?**

- We have an existing 21C program and want to be refunded for five years with ongoing enhancements and/or expansions.
- We are ready to build large full comprehensive and sustainable centers at one or more sites for summer and afterschool.
- We have been thinking about 21C for a while and want to use the 21C application process to try for a five-year comprehensive investment.
- We have started quality programs at new schools using local ESSER funds and want to grow and sustain our initiative.
- We have seen or know 21C funded programs in other communities and want to try the same approach and have five years of funding.

- 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.

## Appendix C - Elements of High-Quality Afterschool and Summertime Programming

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 complement, align to, and/or are unified with other programs and plans in the school and/or community</p> <p>Staffing includes significant licensed teachers, school-based staff, and other community content experts</p>
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	<p>Safety standards are applied to all indoor and outdoor environments</p> <p>School-based emergency and other procedures are used or adapted</p>
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 Serving Regular Attendees	Program participation/duration is robust enough to produce intended results
Strong Instructional Leadership	A designed system of program planning, (intentionality) and staff development exists.



Area	Successful Practice
	Effective content rich components are integrated into the overall program design
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

## Appendix D - Full Comprehensive Center Definition

A center includes a substantial selection of afterschool program options that occur throughout the school year and summer. A center typically needs a centralized brick and mortar location but is not defined solely by that facility. The term “full comprehensive center” denotes a project that is large in scope and in impact as described below. A full comprehensive center can be started and built to these numbers over time. Full comprehensive centers can be built or expanded over time using a variety of funds and strategies.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Larger school example (n&gt;80 students) school year and summer combined</b>	<b>Small school example (n&lt;80 students) school year and summer combined</b>	<b>Summer Programs</b>
# Of programming days	150-200	150-200	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	5-10
# Regular attendees	32%-50% of program attendees	32%-50% of program but should be higher	varies
# program choices offered in a defined time period	15+	10+	many
# Attendees in the program	50% of total school population	50%-100%	varies

<b>Area</b>	<b>Larger school example (n&gt;80 students) school year and summer combined</b>	<b>Small school example (n&lt;80 students) school year and summer combined</b>	<b>Summer Programs</b>
% Free and reduced lunch and IEP/504 attendees served	Same or higher than the school/community average	Same or higher than the school/community average	Same or higher than the school/community average
Suggested annual start-up cost range	\$50,000-\$150,000	\$50,000-\$80,000 and likely teamed with other sites to form a multi-site project	--

## Appendix E - Steps to enroll in the VT AOE Grants Management System

Entities that wish to apply for this opportunity, but do not yet have active GMS accounts will need to follow these steps:

1. Locate your Unique Entity ID number and confirm active status on SAM.gov
  - a. If you do not know whether you have a UEI number, or you know you do not have one, you can check your status and create a new account through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). This process can take several weeks to complete.
2. Locate your Federal Taxpayer Identification Number
  - a. The most commonly used TIN is your organization's Employer Identification Number.
  - b. If you are unsure about your Federal TIN consult your organization's tax professional.
  - c. If you need to apply for an EIN, you can do so through the [IRS website](https://www.irs.gov). This process will likely take between four and five weeks.
3. Complete a federal [W-9 form](#)
  - a. State of Vermont rules require your W-9 to be:
    - i. Dated within twelve months of submission
    - ii. Type-written
    - iii. Signed and dated in blue or black ink
      1. Electronic signatures are **not** acceptable
4. Complete this [Cognito Form](#), which will require all of the information above. This step should be taken as far in advance of your application deadline as possible to ensure adequate time for any corrections or additional information gathering that might be necessary.

Once GMS access has been granted, the following must be completed before any grant applications can be submitted:

1. Follow directions on the GMS landing page to create individual user-level accounts for all personnel who will need them.
2. Assign permissions as appropriate
  - i. At a minimum, your organization must assign:
    - i. Authorized Representative – a director-level employee authorized to sign legally binding contracts on behalf of your organization.
    - ii. Business Manager – a senior-level employee with full knowledge of your organization's budget and business plan.
3. Complete your Central Data collection

## Appendix F - Resource links

### [Summer Learning Program Considerations](#)

This document provides key considerations for supervisory unions and districts in Vermont to support afterschool and summer program planning. Originally created in 2021 to aid pandemic recovery efforts, it now serves as a guide for leveraging existing investments and best practices in extended learning. The document emphasizes setting reasonable goals, prioritizing equity, and strategic investment. It outlines structural considerations for high-quality summer programs, including socioemotional support, student engagement, and academic success. The guide also highlights the importance of effective communication with families and integrating various program components to create dynamic and supportive learning environments.

### [Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation Plan](#)

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21C) Statewide Evaluation Plan is a comprehensive framework designed to assess and enhance the quality and effectiveness of out-of-school time (OST) learning programs in Vermont. This plan aims to guide the activities of the 21C program starting from July 2023. It aligns with Vermont's strategic educational goals and supports the pillars of the state's Education Recovery and Revitalization Framework. The evaluation plan focuses on ensuring access and equity, maintaining high program quality, fostering effective leadership, promoting youth leadership, and ensuring program sustainability. It serves as a roadmap for continuous improvement and accountability, helping local and state grantees achieve desired outcomes for Vermont learners.

### [Vermont 21C Afterschool Hub](#)

This website serves as a hub of coordination efforts for Vermont 21C Centers. Aspects such as sample brochures, Federal regulations along with their related expectations, curriculum, other 21C related resources and much more. If you or your organization is interested in 21C funding, you should check out the website and get in contact with the State 21C Coordinator Emanuel Betz at [Emanuel.Betz@vermont.gov](mailto:Emanuel.Betz@vermont.gov)

### [Summer Program Schedule Samples](#)

This document provides example summer program schedules from prior 21C backed summer programs. These examples are distinct from one another, but they have common information provided between all examples. Aspects like daily schedules, available activity choices, how to register students and information on cost are often found in these samples.

## Appendix G – Application Components

*Provided below is the full list of questions applicants will be asked to answer in the GMS application. Please note, this information is provided as a resource only. All applications must be submitted electronically through the GMS system. No applications will be accepted in any other format.*

### Overview Tab

1. Will this proposal utilize a partnership model between a school, community organization, and/or municipality?
2. Will this proposal serve a currently underserved geographic area?
3. Will this proposal improve access and/or remove barriers to participation for students from Historically Marginalized Groups?
4. Enter the name(s) and free/reduced rates for schools whose students will be served
5. Grades served
6. How many youth will be served annually?
7. Total days of proposed service
8. Program Schedule Summary: Each schedule component must have the time block and a short description of what takes place during each block of time at a minimum
9. What is your estimated annual operating budget?
10. What is the total forty-two-month grant amount requested?
11. Provide a brief summary of the proposal. You will have an opportunity to provide significantly greater detail later in the application.
12. Will your program require fees for participation?
13. Is your proposal intended to address physical access barriers to student participation (e.g., transportation or additional use of existing facility)?
14. Is your proposal intended to address pedagogical supports to student participation (e.g., hiring additional 1-to-1 aides or EL tutors)?
15. Does your proposal include programs that build student knowledge in fields where they might otherwise be underrepresented or where there is an identified need. (e.g., girls in STEM or secondary students in Trades)?
16. List names of other afterschool programs in your service area, if any, that are currently providing afterschool or summer programming for the students being served by this grant.
17. Is your organization also submitting a 21C application this year?
18. Did you or someone from your organization attend the pre-application training?

## Best Practice/Evidence Tab

Guided by best practice, research, and evidence-based programming, which are embedded in the application design, one of the three selections below must be answered in the affirmative.

1. Is the applicant a current 21C grantee and is this proposal part of that initiative?
2. If not a 21C site, do you currently meet these baseline afterschool standards to support best practice, research, and evidence-based practices:
  - a. Vetted and appropriate leadership structure is applied to the program
  - b. High quality staffing is evident (school-based staff and/or licensed staff or equivalents)
  - c. Continuous improvement systems used (data and school-based processes)
  - d. Oversight team and accountability systems are in place
  - e. Full or substantial use of school or organization facilities
  - f. School/district/organization resources are applied
  - g. School/organization and 21C afterschool [safety standards](#) will be met and maintained afterschool
  - h. Programming includes learning, movement and food options daily
  - i. Continuous use of data in system using metrics (see [site collection sample](#))
  - j. Full participation in technical assistance and professional development activities for leaders, generally not to exceed 5 days per year if available.
3. If you are not currently able to affirm the above, what steps are you taking to meet those baselines.

### 1. Capacity tab

#### Core Team Capacity and Commitments (10 points)

Who are the key team member(s), staff, or partners that will support this project and ensure its success? List the leaders in the organization and community that are committed to the project success and what their specific role and commitments will be. List the associated systems and initiatives in place in the school, district, or organization that will support this initiative. List other resources or funds that are available support the goals of the project.

### 2. Program Need Tab

#### Program Need (15 Points)

To supplement the information provided on the Overview Tab, input up to five categories of need articulating the specific needs of students and their families in your

area (e.g., limited transportation or high poverty.) In the Explanation field, explain how your proposal will mitigate the impact of that data point.

Provide data demonstrating the community(ies) needs of students and their families. Consider how the program is aligned to students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Consider the specific needs of students representing historically marginalized groups.

### **3. Program Description Tab**

#### **Program Description (40 Points)**

##### *A. Program Detail (20 points)*

Building off the schedule summary provided on the Overview Tab, please provide a detailed schedule for each program and site covered by this proposal. Detailed schedules should include the time blocks for each component as well as a thorough description of what will be done during that time. As part of that description, include the types of programming that will be offered for each age level and the strategies that will be used to ensure that programming is student-centered and that every participant has a high level of engagement. Be sure your answer references all schedule components, days, offerings, sites, ratios, curriculum, and reasoning. Information provided in this field should be thorough enough to explain the design of your proposed program and highlight its connection to your project's stated outcomes and goals.

##### *B. Program Components (20 points)*

In the spaces provided, please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability, if you have insufficient space to answer any question, use the additional space provided at the bottom of the page.

1. Access and Equity:
  - a. How will the program serve all youth including youth from Historically Marginalized Groups who may need additional supports or accommodations?
  - b. If a fee structure exists; provide a description of the steps your program will take to ensure that no student will be turned away for inability to pay. Note differences between sites if any.
2. Transportation: Describe the need for transportation to and from the afterschool program, if applicable. If there is not a need for transportation support, indicate why.
3. Space and Resources: Describe any available spaces and associated resources used to support the program. Detail any commitments and explanations of space or resources provided by partner organizations.
4. Leadership: Describe the leadership structure(s) of the project including the role, qualifications, and hours they will devote to the project for all members of that structure.



5. Staffing: List the staff types, qualifications, and their roles in implementing the project.

#### **4. Partnerships Tab**

##### **Partnerships (10 Points)**

List partners or other related “mixed delivery” systems (e.g., other program collaborators) you intend to have involved in your project. In the indicated spaces below, write the partner's name and a brief description of how the partnership will support progress towards the goals of your project. Please indicate for each partner if it is an existing partnership or if this will be a new partnership for this project. You may add additional spaces as needed.

#### **5. Outcomes and Goals Tab**

##### **Annual Outcomes (5 Points)**

In the space below, list up to five outcomes you will measure annually. Outcomes should be specific measures that will help you demonstrate progress towards your larger goals. (e.g., Number of unique students participating in programs, as measured at the end of each year)

##### **Three-Year Goals (5 Points)**

In the space below, list three goals you will achieve by the end of year three. These should be the strategic goals your project intends to accomplish and should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) goals. (e.g., By Sept. 30, 2024, 80% of the students in our district will have attended at least one afterschool activity.)

#### **6. Braided Budget and Budget Narrative Tab**

##### **Budget and Budget Description (15 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. The information provided for this budget should reflect the expected expenses in the **first year of operation only**. Subsequent years' budget will be captured on continuation applications.

**Note:** the purpose of this tab is to demonstrate the connection of your budget proposal to your project objectives and to speak to any outside funding that might also be used in that effort. If your project is using no outside funding, the numbers provided here and on the Detailed Budget tab will be identical.

##### *A. Braided Budget*

Complete the chart below, providing a thumbnail budget broken out by general category. If your organization will be braiding other funding sources into your project (e.g., 21C or local funds) please include them in the indicated column. While additional outside funds are not required, including them will give readers a better sense of project feasibility.

At a minimum, this annual budget must consider the following.

	Annual Grand Total (All funds)	Annual Total Grant request	Annual Total (Other funds)
<b>Project Director</b>			
<b>Site Coordinator</b>			
<b>Instruction</b>			
<b>Benefits</b>			
<b>Retirement Contributions</b>			
<b>Contracted Services</b>			
<b>Professional Development</b>			
<b>Supplies</b>			
<b>Equipment</b>			
<b>Transportation</b>			
<b>Travel/Mileage</b>			
<b>Purchased Services</b>			
<b>Professional Services</b>			
<b>Food</b>			
<b>Other</b>			
<b>Total</b>			

**B. Budget Narrative \***

Provide a detailed narrative describing how each budget 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).