

## How a Potential Funding Cut Would Affect Vermont's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Programs

### Impacts at the State Level:

- A 10% cut in funding would mean a reduction of \$570,000/year for Vermont, approximately the amount of funding it takes to run comprehensive afterschool/ summer programs at approximately 7-9 Vermont schools, depending on program size.
  - With cuts at that level, Vermont would see a total of \$2.75 million in reduced funding for afterschool and summer learning programs over the next 5 years.
  - More than 100 communities in Vermont would be directly affected by an across the board 10% cut in funding for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs (see below on local impacts).
  - Even with current levels of funding, according to the State 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Director, in recent grant competitions in Vermont not all projects that were deserving of funding were able to be funded. Currently, there about 70-80 schools in Vermont that qualify for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding but do not at this time have grants.
  - When faced with reductions in funding, sites across the state are forced to choose between running summer programs or running afterschool programs when in fact students and families need both types of programs in all of Vermont's communities. Other reductions that come through in the stories below include cuts to transportation, programming for middle school youth, staffing, field trips, and enrichment.
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### Impacts at the Local Level:

- One Planet Program of the **White River Valley Supervisory Union** (including schools in Bethel, Rochester, Chelsea, Sharon, South Royalton, Stockbridge, Newton, and Tunbridge)
  - A 10% cut at this point in time would impact us. We've been slowly increasing our asking amount from families, towns and schools and I think many of these stakeholders have met their max as far as the amount they can contribute. In other words, if 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding was cut, we would need to make reductions in our program. The first thing that would likely get cut would be the field trips and special events budget. Or we would go back to not running program on 1/2 days (teacher inservice days). Either would mean a reduction in enrichment and/or number of hours. (Carrie McDonnell, One Planet Director)
- Afterschool Programs across the **Mill River Unified Union School District** (including the towns of Clarendon, Shrewsbury, Tinmouth and Wallingford)
  - I believe for us, the commitment to never turn a student away from an afterschool or summer learning experience makes for high dependency on 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. While childcare assistance covers many of our needier students, about 10% fall through the cracks of qualification, yet are from families unable to pay even modest fees. Our own data shows that our programs have the most positive impact on these students and their working families; a cut in funding could likely affect our ability to guarantee equal access for all. (Carrie Becker, Program Director)

- **Winooski School District** (including Winooski Middle/High School and J.F.K. Elementary School)
  - Winooski would have to cut back on a variety of programs that provide students with engaging opportunities that we know most of our students could not otherwise afford on their own. And, we would have to decrease the number of weeks we provide programming during the school year and summer even though the need in the community is great. (Suzanne Skaflestad, Winooski 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Director)
  
- **CaTCH Program at St. Johnsbury School**
  - If our budget was to be cut by 10% that would be the equivalent of us losing 50% of our budget that pays instructors to teach enrichment courses. This would cause us to have to cut back by half on the number of courses we offer each session for the entire year. If we took it from another area in our budget it would mean a deficit in the supplies we could purchase, or the transportation needed for students to get to off-site courses where they participate in things like rock climbing and archery. (Sarah Willey, CaTCH Program Director)
  
- **Burlington KIDS Afterschool Program** (serving the nine schools in the **Burlington School District**)
  - A cut of 10% to our programs would have a significant impact on the level of services we are able to provide, specifically to the over 600 of the middle and high school students we serve. A reduction in funds would lead to a reduction in the amount of summer programming we are able to offer. Currently our middle school summer program is the only free program for this age range in the Burlington area. The program is a proven strategy in preventing the summer slide and keeps students safe, healthy and engaged during critical months. Our program may need to be shortened from five weeks to 3 or 4, and may not have as many high-quality staff to provide programming. The cut would also impact our school year programs at the middle and high school level, in which we may need to eliminate certain activities and program hours. Both of these programs are filling critical needs for our students, specifically with helping students in their personalized learning plans, which could also impact graduation rates. (Christy Gallese, Director of Expanded Learning)
  
- **BEAMS Program at Brattleboro Area Middle School**
  - If we were to have to cut 10% of our funding, we would likely have to cut Friday and Saturday programs. This would still mean that we could have four days of programs, but we would not be able to offer students a safe, warm place with a meal on Fridays. We also have been able to add Saturday programs this year, and that would go away as well. Students would not be able to go on field trips like they do now. (Kate Burt, BEAM Director)
  
- **ENCORE Afterschool Program in North Country Schools Supervisory Union** (including the towns of (Brighton, Charleston, Coventry, Derby, Holland, Jay, Morgan, Newport, Westfield, Lowell, and Troy )
  - I know a constant struggle for us in Encore is weighing enrichment costs with transportation costs. At this point, only one of ten sites can afford to bus their attendees home when afterschool programs finish, which creates a real barrier in this rural area for families without reliable transportation, or that work late without someone to pick their children up. The transportation that we can afford gets our students in the summer from their school to whichever site summer programming is run from and back.

Although we see a need for equity in relation to transportation costs, engaging enrichment has always been a priority in Encore. We feel proud of the programs we run and the opportunities that we provide, whether it be leather working, robot building, gymnastics, or any other of the hundreds of programs we provide across our ten sites each year.

A 10% cut would mean not only would our impressive number of truly unique enrichment opportunities be cut by 10%, but also that we would be that much further from our goal of attaining equitable transportation to allow all students to attend those opportunities.

A coordinator of an Encore site shared with me last week that a student was desperate to join the Odyssey of the Mind after school club and attend the competition in March. Her Mom works late on Thursdays and cannot pick her up, so the student must take the bus home from school. The coordinator was disappointed when she could not find anyone that the girl could even carpool home with, and she is still unable to attend. With a 10% cut this student would still be unable to attend the program, but it is also possible that the club would be unable to attend the competition anyway, as event fees and field trips would be cut before staff. We have important goals that already require every cent of fundraising, donations, and fees to be put towards transportation, with a 10% cut, we would have to continue ignoring a need, and lose ground on our enrichment offerings. (Beth Chambers, ENCORE Director)

- Crossroads Program at **Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union** (including Missisquoi Valley Union Middle and High School and the towns/schools of Highgate, Franklin, Swanton, and Sheldon)
  - If there was a 10% or whatever cut, I believe our summer programs would be the first to go, just because of the infrastructure and staffing that are required (because school is not in session so less staff around or available, "busing to" as well as busing home and double the meals we provide <breakfast & lunch>, and the additional expense of our meals transportation). Thinking that these cuts will not yet add up to 10% of our budget, we will need other reductions like offering less programming, meaning less students will be able to attend, and we will have waiting lists, which right now, we only have at Swanton school site with a waiting list. (Carol Lizotte, CROSSROADS Director)
- REACH! Program in **Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union** (including Harwick Elementary, Wolcott Elementary, and Craftsbury Schools)
  - 10% would be detrimental to our program. While \$14,511 may not seem like a huge amount of money, for our rural communities, the impact would be huge. If divided equally, each of our three sites would lose \$4,837. Our smallest site has a staffing (not including the site coordinator) budget for the school year of just over \$7,000 - and over one-third comes from 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. We would have to look at going to 3 days, or greatly reducing the number of weeks of programming at this site. Our other sites would be in similar situations.

We would have to scale back on our summer programming, as well. Our four- or five-week programs could be shrunk to two- or three-week programs, and research indicates that dosage of that level isn't impacting youth. Our programs balance small-group tutoring with hands-on, creative and critical thinking enrichment. Moreover, they fill a number of gaps that summer vacation creates - the achievement gap, the opportunity gap, social/emotional gap and the gap in access to food.

Another major issue is that our 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staffing funds pay for our non-certified teachers, which is most of our core staff. These are the staff that are here day in and day out, throughout the year, leading multiple programs. They also are the employees for which we've invested in by providing in-house and outside professional development to. They are our STEM leaders, our experts in youth voice and choice, and help make afterschool and summer programs a safe, supportive environment.

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC dollars also support a significant portion of our site coordinator wages. It is already challenging to find qualified individuals who are willing to piece together other part-time positions, to stay in these positions for more than a year or two. They work late into the evening, but are ready to come in before school starts to meet with a teacher about a student who is struggling, or take time away from their own families to call youth's parents in the evening. They celebrate small achievements like a student giving eye contact when they speak, or a student who tried something new. They show up, determined to keep trying, to make a youth feel successful in some way. A cut in funding could mean a decrease in coordinator hours, making it more difficult to attract and retain the backbone of our programs.

Our funding already utilizes local school funds, federal Title grant funds, in-kind donations from local organizations, town recreation funds, grant funds from other sources, and participant fees. These sources, combined with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC dollars, makes this program sustainable. In these economic times, which are ridden with uncertainty for all, a change in any of these could make the program unstable. A cut in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds of 10% would significantly affect our ability to help youth in our community succeed. (Nicole Miller, REACH! Director)