

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS Title IV Part B

Purpose

Federal funding for before school, afterschool and summer as part of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) delivered through the Vermont Agency of Education. The program focuses on supporting educational and social emotionally relevant 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 50% sustainability from other funding sources.
- There is a \$50,000 minimum award. The largest award is \$500,000 annually. The annual allocation for grants has been ~5.6 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
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Representative Annual Data

- 12,000 students served, 5500 regular attendees, in 100 school communities
- 32% of Vermont public schools are funded
- Afterschool program averages: 34 afterschool weeks, 12 hours weekly
- Summer program averages: 5 weeks in summer, 37 hours weekly
- Minimum of 54% of regular attendees are low-income (29% of sites use the *community eligibility provision*, so the low income % is likely higher but ultimately unknown)
- 20% of regular attendees are on IEPs
- Regular attendees attend school more on average (3 fewer in-school absences for secondary youth, 2 for elementary aged children)
- 39% Project Directors with M.A. or higher, 35% Licensed educators as staff
- 90% of sites participate in Quality Assessment System (2020 focuses on 41 SEL items)
- 94% sites meet with principal at least monthly
- 71% sites target academics beyond Homework clubs
- 64% of surveyed grade 5-12 youth report using their skills
- 24% of regular attendees with data had SBAC reading scores (and 17% for math) go from not proficient to proficient or above

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
 - Current contract with Vermont Afterschool Inc. for (e.g.) professional development, evaluation, and social-emotional learning system supports
- An effective investing model for Vermont youth in the “third space”
 - System design and rules supports 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 trauma needs
 - Model builds and supports child-care: one-third of centers are licensed providers
 - The model is scalable and flexible; systems are adaptable

Research Base Overview: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/afterschool-programs-in-the-21st-century-their-potential-and-what-it-takes-to-achieve-it>

