Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers

FY 22 RFP

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
359 North West Street, Suite 111
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

July 28, 2021

AUDITS

1. **Is audit required for all programs?**

   The FY22 21st Century Community Learning Centers Request for Proposals (RFP) requires all applicants to provide a financial audit from the most recently completed fiscal year. **In the event an applicant does not meet the threshold of receiving $750,000 in federal funds in a single year, the applicant must include a letter in the proposal package acknowledging this fact.** As stated on page 23 of the RFP, any non-federal entity that expends $750,000 or more within a year in federal awards shall have a single or program specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F.

2. **Is the audit you are referring to, the entire financial audit conducted annual in the district?**

   For the LEA, the financial audit may be the annual Single audit that is conducted for school districts.

PROGRAM RULES

3. **Can we use 21st CCLC dollars to pay anyone to write the grant?**

   No. Please see page 16 of the RFP that provides examples of unallowable grant expenditures. 21st CCLC grant funds cannot be used to pay for the preparation of the 21st CCLC grant proposal.

4. **We have 3 locations and are applying for them to be under one grant. Is this considered a consortium?**

   No. This program would be considered as one grant with 3 program sites.

5. **Are we required to have a community meeting prior to submitting the application?**

   All applicants are required to notify their communities of the organization's intent to apply for a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant. The organization determines what method of notification is best for the respective community.

6. **Does math have to be included as a subject area? Can we focus on art, literacy, technology and science and not explicitly math?**

   No. 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs can focus on a wide variety of subject areas, academic enrichment activities, youth development activities, and activities to support parent and family engagement opportunities.

7. **What does sustainability look like?**

   Sustainability refers to the ability to continue the afterschool program services after the federal funds end. All applicants are to include a detailed plan for sustainability to address how students' services will continue when there are no remaining grant funds.

8. **Which parts of the proposal are most important to provide specific, concrete details? Obviously, the budget, but which other parts should we make sure to drill down into the details?**

   Each part of the proposal is important. Please note the maximum points for each section: Needs Assessment (20 pts), Program Plan and Implementation (60 pts), Budget (10 pts), and Evaluation Plan (10 pts).

9. **Are project coordinators mandated?**

   The organizational structure is determined by the needs of the proposed program.

10. **Is the cost of recruiting/placement paid by the grant?**

    Recruitment of personnel for the performance of the 21st CCLC program is an allowable expenditure.

11. **What is the indirect cost percentage on this grant? How does the subgrantee calculate indirect costs if they are outside an LEA?**

    LEA subgrantees will use the restricted indirect cost rate assigned by the MDE Office of School Financial Services. Non-LEA subgrantees should use a restricted indirect cost rate not to exceed 8.0% (34 CFR Part 76.564).

12. **Will you clarify that you can only have 3 pages for the budget/narrative?**

The budget pages (Forms A, B, and C) should be completed in their entirety. Please provide all requested information on the budget forms. There are no page limits for budget completion.

13. **Is there a percentage we should budget for equipment?**

No. Your data and identified needs in your proposal should determine the amount of monies spent on equipment from your budget.

14. **Can you buy equipment in year 4?**

No, all equipment for your program should be purchased in years 1, 2, and 3.

15. **Where do proposals typically lose points (those simple mistakes that could have been avoided)?**

Points are typically deducted when the applicant does not completely follow instructions and/or do not appropriately respond to the questions asked.

16. **Should Budget on Form C be detailed and narrative?**

Budget Form C should include figures and a narrative description of all line items found on the form.

17. **Is there carryover?**

No, there are no carryover funds with 21st CCLC. Please see page 27 of the RFP.

18. **What are the measures of effectiveness?**

Measures of Effectiveness refer to factors that assess student success as noted in Title IV-B, Section 4205 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). All grant programs and activities shall:

- Be based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for the 21st CCLC programs and activities in the schools and communities.
- Be based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic achievement opportunities; and
- Be based upon evidence-based research that the 21st CCLC program or activities will help students meet the challenging State academic standards.

All evaluations of 21st CCLC programs must be based on these factors.

19. **There is no match funding required (in-kind or actual match), just**

sustainability for the reduction percentage each year, correct?

Yes, there is no match funding required for the grant. However, a detailed sustainability plan should be submitted within the proposal.

20. **Am I supposed to type anything ...maybe "see Budget Overview (Form A), Budget Narrative (Form B)" or am I supposed to retype a summary of the information that is found on Forms A, B, and C.?**

Please refer to the Instructions for Budget Forms on page 59 of the RFP. Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are found in this section of the RFP.

21. **Should REQUIRED ELEMENTS submitted in this order?**

Yes, please submit information in the order as requested on the Required Elements Checklist on page 71 of the RFP.

22. **Should the evaluator be specifically identified in the proposal?**

It is not required to identify the actual program evaluator in your proposal, but please account for the position in your budget.

23. **Does the indirect cost have to be factored in the 20% Administration allocation?**

Yes, the indirect costs of the program should be factored in the 20% of the administrative allocation.

24. **Is it allowable for a nonprofit agency to use the US Department of Labor's guidance for indirect cost calculation?**

Non-LEA subgrantees should use a restricted indirect cost rate not to exceed 8.0% (34 CFR Part 76.564).

25. **How much funding is available this grant year?**

Grant awards range from $50,000-$400,000 this award year. It is a 4-year grant.

26. **What is the maximum that can be spent for the external evaluator?**

Two percent (2%) of the annual budget is the maximum amount that can be spent on the external evaluator.

27. **How do we locate a professional evaluator?**

The MDE will provide training, a logic model, and an evaluation matrix to assist in the grantees' efforts in locating a professional evaluator.

28. **Does MDE give preference to multi-site proposals over single-site proposals?**

   No, there is no preference regarding the number of sites within proposals.

29. **Will priority points be awarded to schools in counties if the existing 21st CCLC in the county does not serve the school or district?**

   No. Priority points will be awarded to programs proposing to serve students in a county that is not currently being served by 21st CCLC programs

30. **Can any percentage of the funds be used for programs during the school day? Please discuss the use of funds during the school day.**

   Applicants can use 21st CCLC funds to conduct expanded learning programs that provide students at least 300 additional program hours before, during, or after the traditional school day. 21st CCLC programs may operate during traditional school day hours outside of state-mandated instructional time.

31. **We are in our last year of our grant. In order to qualify for a FY22 grant, would the program have to be different than the program we currently have?**

   Yes, your program will have to target a different population of students.

32. **Can any percentage of the funds be used for programs during the school day? Please discuss the use of funds during the school day.**

   Applicants can use 21st CCLC funds to conduct expanded learning programs that provide students at least 300 additional program hours before, during, or after the traditional school day. 21st CCLC programs may operate during traditional school day hours outside of state-mandated instructional time.

33. **Can we apply under this new RFP targeting only preschoolers?**

   Yes, you can target any population of students you identify based upon your needs assessment.

34. **Is it mandatory to have 2 schools or can you focus on just one school?**

   You can choose to serve only one school with 21st CCLC grant funds.

35. **If a district has a school serving middle and high school students, and one serving PreK-5th is it possible to receive 2 separate grants?**

It is possible to receive 2 separate grants if the each of the grants serve a different target population of students.

36. **Do you need the superintendent signature if the proposed site is not located at a school?**

Yes, the superintendent's signature acknowledges the school district's participation in the 21st CCLC program.

37. **Will COVID-19 restrictions allow for changes in the scope of work if they occur at the local level?**

Yes, due to COVID-19 program changes can occur with prior approval from MDE through alternate programming methods on a case-by-case basis. You must contact the Office of Federal Programs for prior approval.

38. **Is the 15 pages limit a minimum or maximum?**

There is a 15-page limit maximum for narrative portion of the proposal.

39. **Can we do summer programs? Does this count towards the 300 hours for expanded learning programs?**

Yes, you can do summer programs. The 300 hours for expanded learning programs must occur before or after school. The summer programming is not included in the 300 hours for expanded learning programs

40. **If we only have a couple of competitive priorities, is that okay to still submit?**
Yes

41. **If the proposal is due on the 26th, why is the FAQ out on the 28th?**

The proposal is due August 13th, 2021.

42. **When should grantees be prepared to start their programs if approved?**

The new 21st CCLC programs will be operational within 30 days of receiving the MDE award notification or within eight weeks from the first day of school, whichever is later.

43. **Would we be required to provide transportation for any private school children who participate?**

It is required to provide transportation; however, it is advised to discuss transportation arrangements with the private schools who are interested in participating during consultation

44. **How many 21ˢᵗ century grants are one organization allowed to have active simultaneously?**

   Two

45. **If we are in the final year of one grant currently (it ends in FY 20-21), would this overlap with the new grant that is being discussed today?**

   No, there will be no overlap.

46. **Please clarify the statement below on page 60 of the 21ˢᵗ CCLC RFP: "The total of the amount budgeted for Evaluation, Indirect cost, and Administrative Cost should not exceed 20%. Project Director, Project Coordinator, Evaluator, Business Manager, and any related positions are considered administrative…"**

   Administrative costs are costs that are associated with the implementation of the 21ˢᵗ CCLC program. Each year, the administrative costs cannot exceed 20% of the annual allocation of the grant. The 20% limit includes the costs for program evaluation, indirect costs, and any administrative positions associated with the 21ˢᵗ CCLC program.

47. **Given that as of today, COVID is on the rise again here in Mississippi, will grantees be allowed to make changes in instructional delivery and scope of work if school districts are forced to return to virtual or hybrid learning models after the application is approved?**

   Yes, due to COVID-19 program changes can occur with prior approval from MDE through alternate programming methods on a case-by-case basis. You must contact the Office of Federal Programs for prior approval.

48. **Is there an anticipated scoring range to be funded?**

   No. This is an open-competitive process. Awarded proposals will be funded from highest to lowest scores until the funding is exhausted. The minimum allowable score is 80.

49. **On RFP p. 27-28, information about fees and program income are provided. Should these issues be addressed in the narrative, and if so, where?**
   Fees and program income should only be addressed in the narrative if your proposed program has fees or program income associated with the program. The information can be included in the Program Plan.

50. **On page 20 of the RFP, it is stated that target population cannot target more than 120% of average daily attendance for FY21. Is COVID being taken into consideration here? The numbers of FY21 are COVID numbers. Should we be looking at 2018-2019 numbers instead?**

The question references the requirement that you cannot serve the same target population at a previously funded 21st CCLC site with new grant funds. The COVID numbers will be considered for programs that were previously operational during 2020-2021; however, the 21st CCLC programs that are continuing in FY22 cannot exceed 120% of the target population from the originally approved grant proposal. Any current 21st CCLC program should consider the target population of students from the original grant proposal

51. **Since the MDE 21st CCLC approvals won't be until late October and funding won't be released until November, can the spring semester be utilized for training and other preparation with the program starting in the summer?**

According to Assurance 31(l) on page 45 of the RFP, new 21st CCLC programs must be operational within 30 days of receiving award notification or within eight weeks from the first day of school, whichever is later. If award notification occurs in October 2021, then the 21st CCLC program must be fully operational in spring 2022.

52. **Can the funding be utilized primarily for summer programs as opposed to after school programs?**

No, summer programs can be funded with 21st CCLC funds in addition to the afterschool programs. Assurance 31(f) on page 45 of the RFP states each 21st CCLC program will operate at least three (3) days per week at a minimum of nine (9) hours per week of afterschool programming. If a summer program is proposed, it must be in conjunction with an afterschool program.

FORMATTING & SUBMISSION

53. **Do the partner letters have to be in a letter format? Can emails work?**

Partner letters should be in letter format, indicating what the contributions will be. The letters should contain original signatures. Emails will not be accepted.

54. **What should be page number 1 of my 15-page narrative? What should page 15 be?**

You are limited to 15 pages of narrative. The narrative portions of the application begin with the abstract, include the needs assessment, program plan and implementation, and conclude with the evaluation plan.

55. **Are all the budget forms A, B, and C included in the maximum allowed 15 pages?**

No, the budget pages are not included in the 15 pages of narrative.

56. **Does the information in charts also have to be double-spaced and comply with font requirements as well?**

   The font size is a recommendation. You are free to format the charts to include all necessary information.

57. **Will appendix pages be accepted?**

   Yes, please label the appendix pages accordingly.

58. **Will an application move to Phase 2 if we use a little smaller font (1.5" spacing and margins less than one inch) based on the 15-page limit?**

   Yes. The font size and margin sizes were strong recommendations for the easy readability of the proposals by the peer reviewers. Applications will not be penalized if they are not double-spaced or if the margin size is not one inch as recommended.

59. **Can charts be single-spaced?**

   Yes

60. **What pages are considered part of the 15 pages of the narrative?**
   Any narrative sections other than charts and required forms.

61. **The proposal recommends double space. On the call, it was stated that we could use single spacing. Please confirm.**

The font size and margin sizes were strong recommendations for the easy readability of the proposals by the peer reviewers. Applications will not be penalized if they are not double-spaced or if the margin size is not one inch as recommended.

21ST CCLC PROGRAM PURPOSE

62. **What are the 21st Century Program Roles and Responsibilities?**

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs provide opportunities for academic enrichment activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session, such as before and after school or during summer recess, particularly for students who attend low-performing schools.

PROGRAM STAFFING/PERSONNEL

63. **Who can't get paid in this program in administration?**

Superintendents, School principals, CEOs, CFOs, Transportation directors, or similar executive positions cannot serve as project directors or site coordinators for 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant programs.

64. **Can one person hold more than one position in the program i.e. Can the project director be site coordinator with a lead teacher?**

The organizational structure is determined by the needs of the proposed program.

65. **Talk about the role of the external evaluator.**

The external evaluator is a vendor who is charged with examining the effectiveness of your 21st CCLC program. The external evaluator should have experience in assessing measurable outcomes, analyzing data, and reporting findings that refine or improve educational afterschool programs.

66. **May non-certified employees be paid overtime wages with 21st CCLC funds?**

The 21st CCLC program is not regarded as a full-time program. Therefore, no overtime wages should be paid with 21st CCLC funds.

67. **Can assistant principals serve as site coordinators?**

Yes, assistant principals can serve as site coordinators for 21st CCLC programs.

68. **Does this mean site supervisors at each site are considered administrative costs? Should site supervisors be listed on Budget Form B and Form C as Administration or Personnel?**

Site supervisors are not considered administrative positions. These positions should be listed on Form B and Form C as personnel.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

69. **If our district is not a CSI, TSI or ATSI school, should we even write a project?**

All interested parties are encouraged to apply for the 21st CCLC grant.

70. **If you already have a grant and have one more year, can I apply?**

Yes, if the applicant is in good standing and propose to serve a different population of students.

71. **What are the qualifications of a district to receive grant funds?**

Any public or private organization is eligible to apply for a 21st CCLC grant. The district must have an active DUNS number, must be in good standing with the Mississippi Department of Education, and have an MDE board-approved proposal.

72. **What hope is there for a district that is neither CSI, TSI, or ATSI school to be awarded?**

We encourage all interested applicants to apply. Remember absolute priority is given to programs that serve students in low-performing schools. Competitive priority points are available to programs that serve CSI, TSI, or ATSI schools.

73. **Are LLCs eligible?**

Yes

PRIVATE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

74. **How will equitable services be calculated for non-public/private schools?**

It is important to remember public schools are providing services to the non-public/private schools. Therefore, the non-public/private schools are invited to participate in the services in your proposed program. Please be reminded that transportation from the non-public/private school to the public-school site for students to participate is the responsibility of the grantee.

75. **Equitable Participation-Does the individual school applying for the grant only provide comparable opportunities to the private schools in the individual school's zone or the entire district? Include all private schools in the district?**

The individual school applying for the grant should conduct consultation with private schools within the attendance zone of the entire school district.

76. **Do you have to consult with private school even if they declined Title I & II services?**

Yes, you must conduct private school consultation with the Title IV, Part B-21$_{st}$ Century Community Learning Centers Grant.

77. **Are private schools that participate subject to the focus presented by the host LEA?**

Private schools that elect to participate in public LEAs' 21$_{st}$ CCLC programs are required to adhere to the program goals and activities as stated in the MDE-approved proposal. The private school is subject to the program focus as presented by the host LEA.

78. **Do we reach out to private schools only? Is there a public-school requirement?**

No. All 21st CCLC programs must involve public schools. If you are a non-public school, nonprofit organization, for profit organization, faith-based organization, and institution of higher learning, you must partner with a public school or school district. The funds are targeted to provide services for public school children with opportunities for children who attended non-public schools to participate in the 21st CCLC program.

PARTNERSHIPS/CO-APPLICANTS

79. **On the summary of partners table, what qualifies as a "partner"? Please provide an example.**

Partners are individuals, organizations, agencies that contribute finances, tangible materials, goods, services, training, and/or volunteers to your 21$_{st}$ CCLC program.

80. **Do you provide separate budget breakdown for co-applicant and partner?**

No. There is only one budget for a single project. The fiscal agent is responsible for the administration of the grant from initial award to grant closeout.

81. **If we are applying jointly/collaboratively with another eligible organization, should we indicate that we are a consortium or individual applicant on the cover page?**

Yes, please refer to Form 1 (Cover Page) on page 53 of the RFP. There is a section on Form 1 for you to indicate whether your proposal is an individual grant or a consortium grant.

82. **For consortium, do you have one fiscal agent?**

There is only one fiscal agent for all grantees—single entities or consortia.

83. **What is the difference between a partner and a consortium?**

A partner is viewed as an entity that provides services and resources to support program operation. A consortium is viewed as co-applicant organizations having substantial roles in the delivery of program implementation. Each co-applicant is actively involved in program planning and design, share grant resources, make joint decisions, and have ongoing, significant involvement in the management and oversight of the program.

84. **Must partners contribute financially or through services?**

Partners may contribute monies, services, or tangible materials/goods to the 21st CCLC program.

85. **Do we have to partner with an LEA?**

Yes, all 21st CCLC programs must partner with a public school or school district.

86. **Is a partnership or at least an attempt at a partnership with a private school mandatory?**

Yes, it is important to remember public schools are required to provide services to eligible students who attend non-public/private schools in the local attendance area. Therefore, the non-public/private schools should be invited to participate in the services of your proposed program through consultation.

87. **As a Non-Profit Corporation, we have partnered with one private school so far and several childcare facilities. Are there any other things that we should consider as we prepare?**

Consider the needs of the children you plan to serve in your community.

88. **If we partner with the local school district but we act as the fiscal agent, is that a co-applicant or partner relationship?**

    A partner is viewed as an entity that provides services and resources to support program operation. A consortium is viewed as co-applicant organizations having substantial roles in the delivery of program implementation. Each co-applicant is actively involved in program planning and design, share grant resources, make joint decisions, and have ongoing, significant involvement in the management and oversight of the program.

89. **Seasons of Columbus/Columbus Housing Authority proposes to serve a cohort of children within the Columbus Municipal School District that are residents in the Columbus Housing Authority. The school district has actively participated in the development of the proposal through consultation and meetings and will be providing specific services (professional development, software, and regularly scheduled teacher consultations, etc.) if approved. Since Columbus Housing Authority/Seasons of Columbus will act as fiscal agent, will this be a joint/co-applicant or partnership?**

    A partner is viewed as an entity that provides services and resources to support program operation. Based upon the information given, it appears the project would be a partnership.

REIMBURSEMENTS

90. **How and when will funds be distributed or reimbursed?**

    All 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants are reimbursement only grants. All grantees are required to submit monthly requests for reimbursements. Reimbursements will not be processed until an official proposal and revised budget have been approved by the MDE.

91. **If the request for funds is submitted by the 5th, what is the amount of time to be reimbursed?**

    The normal time is within 30 days if the requests for funds are submitted by the deadline.

92. **Since it is reimbursement only, is it correct that participants must launch programs with their own funds? How long does it take for reimbursement each month?**

Yes, programs must be funded with applicants' own funds. The 21ST CCLC grant is reimbursement only. Reimbursements are typically completed within 30 days of request submissions.

TRAININGS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

93. **Will the webinar and training PowerPoint slides be posted on the MDE site?**

    Yes, the RFP webinar, RFP training PowerPoint slides, and recorded RFP training video will be posted on the 21st CCLC webpage on the MDE website https://www.mdek12.org/OFP/Title-IV-Part-B.

94. **There is no Notice of Intent form for Year 2022 online. Do we use the form from Year 2021?**

    No, you don't use the form from 2021. The notice of intent form is found on page 68 of the RFP and it is posted on the 21st CCLC webpage at https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OFP/21st%20CCLC/fy22_notice_of_intent_to_apply.docx.

95. **Is the Notice of Intent to Apply a letter? If so, is there a form online that we fill out for it?**

    There is no letter. The intent to apply form is found on page 68 of the FY22 RFP

96. **Is there a PowerPoint available for download?**

    Yes, it is available at: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OFP/21st%20CCLC/21st_cclc_rfp_training_frn_7.15.2021.ppt

97. **When will the FY22 Intent to Apply be available online?**

    The FY22 Intent to Apply is available online https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OFP/21st%20CCLC/fy22_notice_of_intent_to_apply.docx. It is also available on page 68 of the RFP.