

Release Date: July 9, 2026

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Dr. Tony Sanders 
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO):
Fiscal Year 2027 Nita M. Lowey Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers

CSFA Number: 586-46-0423
CSFA Title: Title IV – Nita M. Lowey Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers

CFDA Number: 84.287C
CFDA Title: Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers

Program Overview

Eligibility and Application Information

Executive Summary: The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in collaboration with the Governor’s Office, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Illinois Department of Human Services, presents this NOFO for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Grant, a federally funded opportunity authorized by Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ([ESSA](#)) (20 U.S.C. § 7171-7176). Its purpose is to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers. The program is designed to provide academically focused after-school opportunities, particularly to students who attend high-poverty, low-performing schools, to help them meet state and local performance standards in core academic subjects and to offer families of participating students opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Eligible Applicants: Public and private entities, including Local Education Agencies (LEAs) such as public school districts; public university laboratory schools approved by ISBE; state-authorized charter schools;¹ area vocational centers; Regional Offices of Education (ROEs); Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs); community-based organizations (CBOs), including faith-based organizations (FBOs); Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as such terms are defined in section 5304 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act) (25 U.S.C. § 5304); and other public and private entities or a consortium of two or more such agencies, organizations, or entities are eligible to apply.

The number of awards will be determined by the number of applications received and the needs of the seven areas of the state as specified by the Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents’ regional service model. **ISBE reserves the right to determine the number of awards and the amount of the awards. As a result, applicants may be awarded less than the full amount of requested funding.** Under no circumstances shall the issuance of this NOFO be construed as an obligation, commitment, or promise on the part of ISBE to award or provide funding. No awardee will receive less than \$50,000 or greater than \$600,000, with individual awards not exceeding \$150,000 per site.

¹ Refers specifically to charter schools that are authorized by ISBE as opposed to charter schools authorized by LEAs. Charter schools authorized by LEAs are not eligible to apply independently from their authorizing LEAs.

An applicant is not required to have previous experience in providing after-school programs; however, applicants lacking such experience must demonstrate in their proposals that they can be successful in providing educational and related activities that will increase academic achievement and enhance positive youth development of the students to be served.

Applicants will need to use their Region, County, District, Type (RCDT) code when applying. Applicants can verify their RCDT code on the [ISBE Region County District Type Schools \(RCDTS\) Lookup webpage](#). Applicants that do not have an RCDT code should email 21cclcrfp@isbe.net for information on how to establish an RCDT code prior to submitting a proposal.

Joint Applications: A consortium of two or more eligible applicants may apply as co-applicants by submitting a joint proposal. An administrative agent must be designated for each proposal. The co-applicant is equally responsible for the implementation of the grant and will sign off on all certifications and assurances. All proposals must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between co-applicants that includes the signature of each district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal signifying that they agree to participate in the joint application. **Applications that do not include a signed MOU at time of submission will not be scored.** Co-applicants in a consortium may submit multiple proposals in response to this NOFO. A co-applicant is required in order to receive priority points as a jointly submitted application, unless an LEA applicant demonstrates it is unable to partner with another eligible entity in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality.

In addition, proposals that are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization may address the following priority areas. Applications that are not submitted as joint applications between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization will not be eligible for any points within the following priority areas:

- **Comprehensive, Intensive, or Targeted Eligible Schools and Joint Applications:** These are programs that serve the state's Comprehensive, Intensive, or Targeted schools (as designated by the 2024-2025 [Illinois School Report Card](#)) and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization.
- **Tier 1 or Tier 2 School Districts Not Served and Joint Applications:** These are programs between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization serving schools from Tier 1 or Tier 2 districts identified as not having been funded in Cohorts 25 or 26. This status is determined by Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) for FY 2026. See the [ISBE Evidence Based Funding Distribution Calculation webpage](#).
- **Middle and High Schools and Joint Applications:** These are programs that serve eligible middle schools or high schools **and** are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization.
- **Rural Schools and Joint Applications:** These are programs that propose to serve students who attend 40 percent or higher low-income rural schools, based on a school's FY 2026 [Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility Data](#) **and** are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization.
- **Novice Grantees and Joint Applications:** These are grantee applicants, including all co-applicants, and programs that have not been awarded a 21st CCLC grant since before FY 2015. The application is submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization. If any applicant or co-applicant indicated on the proposal has been awarded one or more 21st CCLC grants in FY 2015 or later, the proposal will **not** qualify for Novice Grantees priority points.

For the purpose of this NOFO, all priority areas are further defined in the Grant Competition Priorities section beginning on page 10.

Note: The co-applicant/joint applicant shares the responsibilities of grant deliverables and is meant to have a permanent relationship with the primary applicant for the purposes of this grant.

Population to be Served: The law requires that 21st CCLC awards be granted only to applicants that will primarily serve students who attend schools with a high concentration of students from low-income families (defined as not less than 40 percent of the students being eligible for free or reduced-price meals). Students who attend schools that meet this criterion are the intended beneficiaries of the grant services and are hereafter referred to as either *eligible students* or *eligible schools*. To this end, each applicant **must** propose to serve high-poverty schools or schools eligible for schoolwide programs under [Section 1114](#) of the ESEA as amended by ESSA, Title I, Part A (i.e., schools in which not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families). Applications proposing services to schools with less than 40 percent low-income students as reported on the 2024-25 [Illinois Report Card](#) **will not be considered**. The proposal must clearly indicate the population to be served by listing the schools attended by the population to be served. **Failure to identify the school(s) to be served and the correct RCDTS code(s) for the identified school(s) to be served will result in the application not being scored for funding.**

Note: Elementary schools also may use the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals to calculate the low-income count. The free and reduced-price count generated at a middle or high school or from the elementary schools that feed into the middle and/or high schools may be used to establish the low-income count at the receiving middle or high school. Data is readily available on the [ISBE Child Nutrition and Data Analytics and Mapping Tools webpage](#). Please use the FY 2026 results.

Note: An applicant cannot propose to serve any school or other entity that will be receiving services during FY 2027 under a 21st CCLC grant. As such, applications that propose services to schools that are already being served by another 21st CCLC grant during FY 2027 will not be funded. A list of schools currently receiving services is posted on the [ISBE 21st CCLC Grantees, Sites, and Allotments Dashboard](#). (Scroll to the bottom of the page.) Any schools proposed to be served under this NOFO must either not be receiving services under a 21st CCLC grant OR the 21st CCLC grant providing services must expire June 30, 2026, or have an approved continuation application to extend until Aug. 31, 2026.

Those entities wishing to apply to provide services to public school(s) in the city of Chicago must obtain appropriate permission via original signature from the designated official with authority to act on behalf of Chicago Public Schools District 299. Additional information required for applications proposing to serve Chicago Public Schools District 299 is posted with NOFO information on the [ISBE 21st CCLC webpage](#).

Applicant Status: Applicants may submit multiple proposals in response to this NOFO. Applicants are advised to review the specifications and proposal requirements. All proposals will be entered into the same competition for 21st CCLC funds. All applicants will be restricted to receiving a maximum of three funded grants in response to the proposals received for this NOFO.

Application Ineligibility: An application will be deemed ineligible and will NOT be read if any of the following is applicable:

- The application is not signed by an authorized representative on page 3 of Attachment 1.
- The application is submitted prior to the applicant obtaining a Region County District Type (RCDT) code.
- The applicant does not complete Steps 1- 3 of the State of Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) [prequalification process](#) prior to submitting an application.
- The application is submitted after the deadline of 4:00 pm on August 24, 2026.
- The applicant proposes services to one or more schools with less than 40 percent low-income students as reported on the 2024-25 [Illinois Report Card](#).

- The applicant proposes to serve schools that are already being served by the 21st CCLC Grant.
- The application is submitted with any of the following information missing:
 - Attachment 1: Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance
 - Applicant Name
 - Correct Applicant RCDT Code
 - Correct Applicant Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
 - Signature of Authorized Representative (number 53)
 - Attachment 3: Program Summary
 - For All Schools Being Served:
 - Name of School Being Served
 - Correct RCDTS Code
 - Attachment 9: Federal Budget Summary
 - Must be submitted on provided form. No other budget form will be accepted.
 - District budgets MUST be signed by the district superintendent. Other applicants should have an authorized official sign the form.
 - Attachment 14A: Applicant-Generated Documents
 - Attachment 14A must include signed and dated MOU(s) between the applicant and all co-applicants unless the LEA applicant is unable to partner with another eligible entity in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality. In this instance, the LEA must upload a letter that demonstrates their efforts to identify and obtain a co-applicant and an explanation of why they were unable to partner.
 - Attachment 14A must include signed and dated MOU(s) between the applicant and the principals of all schools proposed to be served

NOTE: [GATA](#) requires applicants to complete prequalification requirements before applying for any grant. Grant applications must be submitted by the application deadline indicated in this NOFO. Applicants are advised to complete the prequalification requirements well in advance of the NOFO deadline.

Tentative awardees will be required to complete an FY 2027 Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment in the form of an Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ) available through the [GATA Grantee Portal](#), an FY 2027 Organizational Risk Assessment through the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) system, and the FY 2027 Programmatic Risk Assessment that is found within the electronic Grants Management System budget. Grant awards will not be executed until the FY 2027 ICQ, Organizational Risk Assessment, and Programmatic Risk Assessment are completed.

System for Award Management (SAM): Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or federal or state awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the federal or state awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in [SAM](#) before submitting its application;
- (ii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal or federal pass-through award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal or state awarding agency. ISBE may not consider an application for a federal pass-through award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements.

Region County District Type Code Requirement: Applicants will need to use their RCDT code when applying. Applicants may verify their RCDT code on the [ISBE Region County District Type Schools \(RCDTS\) Lookup webpage](#).

First-time applicants without an RCDT code must call or email the program contact for information on how to establish an RCDT code before applying. Please allow up to four weeks for the processing of such a request. **An entity that submits an application prior to obtaining an RCDT code is ineligible.**

Code of Federal Regulations / Title 2 - Grants and Agreements

This grant is subject to the provisions of:

- [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, 30 ILCS 708/1 et seq.](#)
- [Administrative Rules for GATA, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000](#)

Merit-Based Review and Selection Process for Competitive Grants: ISBE is required to design and execute a merit-based review and selection process for applications. This process is incorporated by reference in all applicable funding opportunities. Applicants are advised to refer to the [ISBE Merit-Based Review Policy](#).

Grant Award:

The amount of federal funding anticipated to be available in FY 2027 is approximately \$25.0 million. For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the Stevens Amendment), applicants are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources.

Annual grant awards will be a minimum of \$50,000 and a maximum of \$600,000, with individual awards not exceeding \$150,000 **per site**. A site is defined as the physical location where grant-funded services and activities are provided to participating students and adults.

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding based on the amount needed to operate the proposed program AND the minimum number of 21st CCLC participants they are proposing to serve for at least 45 hours or more during the program year.

Maximum funding tiers per site are as follows:

- \$50,000 = 25-40 minimum students served 45 hours or more.
- \$75,000 = 41-55 minimum students served 45 hours or more.
- \$100,000 = 56-70 minimum students served 45 hours or more.
- \$125,000 = 71-85 minimum students served 45 hours or more.
- \$150,000 = 86 or more minimum students served 45 hours or more.

Cost Sharing: A cost sharing or matching component is not required for these funds.

ISBE reserves the right to determine the number and amount of awards based upon the total funds appropriated for this program. It is possible that grantees may not be awarded the full amount of requested funding.

Proposals that score under 111 points will not be funded.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2026, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2027. Successful applicants may reapply via continuing application for up to two additional years. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon compliance with federal and state laws, state grant-making rules, passage of sufficient appropriations for the program, and satisfactory performance in the preceding grant period. No promise or undertaking made in this NOFO is an assurance that a grant agreement will be renewed, nor does this NOFO create any right to or expectation of renewal.

Submission Dates and Times/Other Submission Requirements: Proposals should be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on August 24, 2026. Directions for submission are found below.

ISBE Attachment Manager: Completed proposals should be scanned into PDF with all supporting documents and required signatures and submitted via the [ISBE Attachment Manager](#). Choose 21cclcrfp from the dropdown menu in Receiver Information. Submit the application using the button at the bottom of the page. The submission confirmation page should be printed and retained as proof of submission. Please contact 21cclcrfp@isbe.net PRIOR to the close of the NOFO if the ISBE Attachment Manager isn't accepting applications.

Late proposals will not be accepted.

Grant Award Notice: It is anticipated that successful applicants will receive a Notice of Award via email approximately 90 days after the application deadline. The award letter is NOT an authorization to begin performance or expenditures. After the merit-based appeal timeframe has ended, awardees will receive additional information from the program area that includes the next steps for finalizing the grant. All costs incurred prior to the start date of the award are undertaken at the applicant's own risk.

Non-Award Notice: It is anticipated that unsuccessful applicants will receive a Notice of Non-Award via email approximately 90 days after the application deadline. Unsuccessful applicants are advised to refer to the [ISBE Merit-Based Review Policy](#).

Technical Assistance Session: A technical assistance recording will be posted to the [ISBE 21st Century Community Learning Centers Prospective Grantee webpage](#) on or around July 15, 2026.

Changes to NOFO: ISBE will post any changes made to the NOFO prior to August 17, 2026 on the ISBE [Funding Opportunities webpage](#). Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

Agency Contact/Contact to Request Application Package: Contact the Wellness and Student Care Department at 217-782-5270, or 21cclcrfp@isbe.net for more information on this NOFO. All questions asked concerning this NOFO will be responded to in a Frequently Asked Questions document so all respondents can see all questions and the responses to the questions. Changes to the FAQ will not be made after August 17, 2026. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

General Information

Program Background and Description

Program Purpose:

The purpose of 21st CCLC programs as authorized by Title IV, Part B of the ESEA as amended by [ESSA](#) (20 U.S.C. 7171-7176) is to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that:

1. Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services, to help students (particularly students who attend low-performing schools) to meet challenging state academic standards.
2. Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities; service learning; nutrition and health education; drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; arts, music, physical fitness, and wellness programs; technology education programs; financial literacy programs; environmental literacy programs; mathematics, science, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs; internship or apprenticeship programs; and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and
3. Offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

The purposes listed above for 21st CCLC are aligned to ESSA. The allocation of funds to State Education Agencies (SEAs) continues to be appropriated by formula. There are several changes in ESSA requirements. Among them are requirements that SEAs use 93 percent of their state formula grants to make competitive subgrants, that SEAs give priority to partnerships between LEAs receiving Title I Part A funds and CBOs or other public or private entities, and that federal funds supplement and do not supplant state and local funds. Section 4204 of ESSA requires that SEAs make awards only to eligible entities that propose to serve (a) primarily students who attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs under Section 1114 or schools that serve a high percentage of students from low-income families, and (b) the families of the students to be served by the program. In addition, the requirement to provide equitable services to eligible private school students in Section 8501 of ESSA may not be waived.

Program Description:

The program is designed to provide academically focused after-school opportunities, particularly to students who attend high-poverty, low-performing schools, to help those students meet state and local performance standards in core academic subjects and to offer families of participating students opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Federal Description:

The 21st CCLC program, funded under Title IV Part B, provides "seed money" or start-up funds to support the creation of community learning centers with an intent to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

Program Background/History:

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program was created in 1994 by ESEA and expanded in 2001 by the No Child Left Behind Act to provide students in high-need, high-poverty communities the opportunity to participate in after-school programming. These academic enrichment and youth development programs are present in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories and are designed to enhance participants' well-being and academic success. States were given the 21st CCLC funds from the U.S. Department

of Education (ED) as formula funds in 2002 to be managed as statewide competitions and award grants to eligible entities.

Program Objectives:

The purpose of the 21st CCLC program is to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities for academic enrichment, including tutorial services, to help students (particularly students who attend high-poverty, low-performing schools) meet the challenging state academic standards.

The program objectives of Illinois Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers are:

Objective 1: Schools will improve student achievement in core academic areas.

Objective 2: Schools will show an increase in student attendance and graduation from high school.

Objective 3: Schools will see an increase in the social-emotional skills of their students.

Objective 4: Programs will collaborate with the community.

Objective 5: Programs will coordinate with schools to determine the students and families with the greatest need.

Objective 6: Programs will provide ongoing professional development to program personnel.

Objective 7: Programs will collaborate with schools and community-based organizations to provide sustainable programs.

The program purpose can be achieved by addressing the following:

1. Provide academic enrichment opportunities for children in grades prekindergarten through 12, particularly to help children who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools meet state and local student academic achievement standards in core subjects. Activities are expected to improve student academic achievement as well as overall student success.
2. Provide core academic subjects, including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, fine arts, history, and geography.
3. Offer academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and their families.
4. Provide student activities during non-school hours (before or after school) or periods when school is not in session (including holidays, weekends, or summer recess). Family activities, however, are not restricted to non-school hours and may take place at any time.
5. Offer Expanded Learning Time (ELT), which may occur only if it aligns to the 21st CCLC activities. No more than 25 percent of the total budget can be allocated to ELT activities.
 - a. ELT is the time that an LEA or school extends its normal school day, week, or year to provide additional instruction or educational programs for all students beyond the state-mandated requirements for the minimum hours in a school day, days in a school week, or days or weeks in a school year.
 - b. Applicants seeking 21st CCLC funds for ELT programs must provide ALL students at the school with at least 300 additional program hours before, during, or after the traditional school day programming.
6. Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic programs of participating students. Activities may include youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; art, music, and recreation programs; technology education programs; and character education programs.
7. Provide a safe environment for students when school is not in session, including safe travel accommodations to and from the center and home for community learning centers established under the 21st CCLC program.
8. Offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Community Learning Center

The term "community learning center" means an entity that:

- A. Assists students to meet challenging state academic standards by providing the students with academic enrichment activities and a broad array of other activities.
- B. Offers activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before and after school or during summer recess) that:
 - a. Reinforce and complement the regular academic programs of the schools attended by the students served, and
 - b. Are targeted to the students' academic needs and aligned with the instruction students receive during the day.
- C. Offers families of students served by such center opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Full-Service Community Schools

Elements of full-service community schools (FSCSs) can be offered by 21st CCLCs. FSCSs, as described by ED's Full-Service Community Schools Program, encourage coordination of academic, social, and health services through partnerships among:

1. Public elementary and secondary schools;
2. The schools' LEAs; and
3. CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and other public or private entities.

FSCSs provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students' family members, and community members that will result in improved educational outcomes for children. These services may include:

- High-quality early learning programs and services;
- Remedial education aligned with academic supports and other enrichment activities that provides students with a comprehensive academic program;
- Family engagement, including parental involvement, parent leadership, family literacy, and parent education programs;
- Mentoring and other youth development programs;
- Community service and service learning opportunities;
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been chronically absent, truant, suspended, or expelled;
- Job training and career counseling services;
- Nutrition services and physical activities;
- Primary health and dental care;
- Activities that improve access to and use of social service programs and programs that promote family financial stability;
- Mental health services; and
- Adult education, including instruction of adults in English as a second language.

A list of other allowable FSCS activities is provided beginning on page 13 of this NOFO. See further information regarding the [ED Full Services Community Schools Program](#).

Policy Requirements:

There are no ISBE policy requirements for this posting.

Performance Measures:

Measures include the following:

Ten percent increase in proficiency and growth in core academic areas for program participants who attend 45 hours or more during the program year by the end of the grant award period.

Ten percent higher attendance rates or increased homework completion rates or positive changes toward school for 20 percent of student participants by the end of the program year.

Targets:

Semiannual increases of 2.5 percent in proficiency and growth in core academic areas for program participants who attend 45 hours or more during the program year.

Attendance rates that are 2.5 percent higher, increased homework completion rates, and positive changes toward school for student participants quarterly.

Performance Standards:

Five percent annual growth in core academic areas for program participants who attend 45 hours or more during the program year.

Five percent annual higher attendance rates or increased homework completion rates, or positive changes for student participants.

Deliverables and Milestones:

Deliverable 1: Completion of annual local evaluation.

Deliverable 2: Completion of spring survey as part of the statewide evaluation.

Deliverable 3: Completion of triannual performance reports (Benchmarking) via submission to MyIRC.

Deliverable 4: Participation and completion of Tier 1, 2, and 3 monitoring by ISBE.

Deliverable 5: Attendance at ISBE-sponsored workshops and trainings for 21st CCLC.

Deliverable 6: Administration of teacher survey to core academic teachers of student participants in Grades 1-5.

Grant Competition Priorities

ISBE has established five areas in which applicants can receive competitive priority points for the FY 2027 21st CCLC grant competition. Proposals that receive a base score of 111 points or higher (out of 185 total possible points) from Section 1-6 of the Evaluation Rubric, as explained in the Application Review and Selection Process section beginning on page 40, will be eligible for up to 50 competitive priority points. Proposals may address the following priority areas in order to receive competitive priority points:

Detailed Explanation of Five Priority Areas - In order to be eligible for any priority points, proposals must be submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization. If an LEA applicant sufficiently demonstrates it is unable to partner with another eligible entity in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality, a joint application is not required for priority points in any of the five priority areas.

1. Comprehensive, Intensive, or Targeted Eligible Schools and Joint Applications: 10 priority points

These are programs that serve the state's Comprehensive, Intensive, or Targeted schools (as designated by the 2024-25 [Illinois Report Card](#)) and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization.

2. Tier 1 or Tier 2 School Districts Not Served and Joint Applications: 10 priority points

These are programs that serve schools from Tier 1 or Tier 2 districts identified as not having been funded in Cohorts 25 or 26 and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization. This status is determined by a district's EBF for FY 2026. See [ISBE's Evidence-Based Funding Distribution webpage](#).

3. Middle and High Schools and Joint Applications: 10 priority points

These are programs that serve eligible middle schools or high schools **and** are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization ("eligible schools" as indicated in the Population to be Served section on page 3 of this NOFO).

For the purpose of this NOFO, middle schools are defined as eligible schools that contain Grades 5 through 8, 6 through 8, or 7 and 8. High schools are defined as eligible schools that serve any combination of Grades 9 through

12 that grant a diploma upon completion. These are typical grade bands and special considerations can be made for extenuating circumstances.

4. Rural Schools and Joint Applications: 10 priority points

These are programs that serve students who attend 40 percent or higher low-income rural schools based on a school's FY 2026 [Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility Data](#) **and** are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization.

A school district in Illinois is considered rural if it meets any of the following criteria:

- School(s) within a district with a [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES) locale code of 31, 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43.
- School(s) within a Community Unit District with a student enrollment* of 3,500 or fewer.
- School(s) within an Elementary District with a student enrollment* of 2,500 or fewer.
- School(s) within a High School District with a student enrollment* of 1,100 or fewer.

*Enrollment counts are based upon the most recent finalized Fall Enrollment count data at the time of application.

Verification of rural status will be made by using the National Center for Education Statistics provided by ED at [NCES School and District Navigator](#) for NCES locale codes and the 2024-2025 Illinois Report Card for district enrollment. Rural status will be assessed based upon the status of the school(s) proposing to be served. Further information regarding the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals can be found in the Application Review and Selection Process section beginning on page 40.

5. Novice Grantees and Joint Applications: 10 priority points

These are grantee applicants, including all co-applicants, and programs that have not been awarded a 21st CCLC grant since before FY 2015. The application is submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A **and** at least one public or private community organization. If any applicant or co-applicant indicated on the proposal has been awarded one or more 21st CCLC grants in FY 2015 or later, the proposal will not qualify for Novice Grantees priority points.

PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS

The 21st CCLC programs provide activities and support that are expected to improve student academic achievement as well as overall student success.

The following section is separated into three distinct parts for the purpose of describing the 21st CCLC program specifications. The three parts are (1) Program Design, (2) Evaluation and Monitoring, and (3) Community Connections.

Program Design

- Program Purpose:** The 21st CCLC program offers high-quality academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and their families. These programs are especially important for students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools and are designed to assist students in meeting state and local academic achievement standards in **core** subjects. ESSA specifically indicates services are to be provided outside the regular school day or during periods when school is not in session, but activities targeting adult family members and prekindergarten children or ELT services may take place during regular school hours, as these times may be the most suitable for serving these populations. The ELT program must align to the 21st CCLC requirements. The proposal must detail the reason for providing the 21st CCLC program. There will be goals and objectives in the program that should align to the performance standards and focus on improving student academic achievement as well as overall student success.
- Needs Assessment:** Applicants must conduct a local needs **and** resources assessment prior to submitting the application in order to determine how to best serve the needs of the students, families, and

communities. The needs assessment should include an appraisal of the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and moral development needs of the youth population to be served.

The needs and resources assessment should be conducted prior to the submission of the application and include, at a minimum, an appraisal of the availability of community resources (e.g., drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; art, music, and recreation programs; technology education programs; and character education programs). A gap analysis must be conducted on the data collected, including an identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the youth developmental needs, parent and family engagement needs, and available community services.

C. **Collaboration Requirement:** Each non-LEA applicant must actively collaborate with the LEAs and school(s) from which participating students attend to develop and implement the proposed program. Evidence of the collaboration must be illustrated by documentation that includes references to shared vision-building, planned results or outcomes, mutually identified goals, intervention strategies, and activities. The terms of the partnership must be established in a written agreement or an MOU that clearly articulates how each partner will contribute to the project. For example, collaboration may include shared space, in-kind services, janitorial services, and security for the school. LEA applicants must share appropriate information and data, including grades, test scores, content-area standards, and curriculum, with those non-LEA applicants involved in the program at no cost as part of the partnership. All student data must be treated in accordance with the [Illinois School Student Records Act](#) and the [Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#). Please see questions F-3 and F-4 of ED's <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/10/21st-cclc-non-reg-draft-guidance-updated-10-19-2023.pdf> Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance.

D. **Allowable Activities:** Each eligible entity that receives an award may use the award funds to carry out a broad array of activities that advance student academic achievement and support student success, including, but not limited to:

- Academic enrichment learning programs, mentoring programs, remedial education activities, and tutoring services that are aligned with the challenging state academic standards and any local academic standards;
- Local curricula that are designed to improve student academic achievement;
- Well-rounded education activities, including such activities that enable students to be eligible for credit recovery or attainment;
- Literacy education programs, including financial literacy programs and environmental literacy programs;
- Programs that support a healthy and active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical activity programs;
- 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;
- Telecommunications and technology education programs and expanded library service hours;
- Parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement, family engagement, and family literacy;
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled to allow the students to improve their academic achievement;
- Drug and violence prevention programs and counseling programs;
- Programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), including computer science, and that foster innovation in learning by supporting nontraditional STEM education teaching methods; 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

Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).

E. **Other Allowable Use of Funds:** FSCSs can be supported by 21st CCLC funds that are used to provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students' family members, and community members and will result in improved educational outcomes for children. These services may include, but are not limited to:

- High-quality early learning programs and services;
- Remedial education aligned with academic supports and other enrichment activities that provide students with a comprehensive academic program;
- Family engagement activities, including parental involvement, parent leadership, family literacy, and parent education programs;
- Mentoring and other youth development programs, and community services and service learning opportunities;
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been chronically absent, truant, suspended, or expelled;
- Job training and career counseling services, nutrition services and physical activities, primary health and dental care;
- Activities that improve access to and use of social service programs and programs that promote family financial stability;
- Mental health services;
- Adult education, including instruction of adults in English as a second language; and
- Social-emotional learning.

F. **Implementing Activities Based on Evidence-Based Practices or Research:** The authorizing statute provides measures of effectiveness (see Evaluation and Monitoring section beginning on page 17) to guide applicants in successfully identifying and implementing programs and activities that can directly enhance student learning, one of which includes activities based on evidence-based practices or research.

Accordingly, 21st CCLC programs must employ strategies that are evidence- or research-based and, where possible, incorporate college and career-readiness skills.

G. **Innovative and Evidence-Based Practices Programs:** The chart that begins below includes resources for evidence-based programs that can be implemented in the proposed 21st CCLC. These programs must supplement what is already being provided and cannot take the place of programs currently being implemented. The programs must utilize evidence-based practices and include strategies that will make an impact on improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing postsecondary enrollment. Applicants may choose from any number of innovative promising practices. ISBE does not endorse any particular program or organization; the accompanying list, although not exhaustive, is provided to exemplify high-quality innovative programs.

For purposes of this NOFO, “evidence-based” means the proposed project component is supported by one or more of strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence, or evidence that demonstrates a rationale (Title 34 Subsection 77.1). For more information on best practices, see [Expanding Minds and Opportunities Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success](#).

Type of Program	Organization
21 st Century Skills	Partnership for 21st Century Skills

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	PBS Teachers STEM Education Resource Center For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) NASA STEM Gateway Educator Professional Development Collaborative (EPDC)
Career Competencies and Career Readiness	Career Cruising CTE: Learning that Works Resource Center Illinois Work Net Career Planning Tools Illinois Student Assistance Commission College Career Planning Illinois Career Information System Illinois State Board of Education Career Guide (online resource available) U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Social and Emotional Learning Programs and Practices	Illinois State Board of Education
Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	National Center for State Supportive Learning Environments
Well-Rounded Education Activities	What Works Clearinghouse Mikva Challenge Consortium for Entrepreneurs in Education National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship Junior Achievement Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Illinois Environmental Protective Agency
Supports for Sub-Group Populations	Mott Foundation Compendium

- H. **Academic Programs:** Programs designed to provide academic opportunities and activities to students that target those most in need of academic assistance in low-performing, high-poverty schools may be supported with 21st CCLC program funds. Academic programs must help students meet the Illinois Learning Standards as well as local standards in the core academic subjects. In this regard, academic programs must be aligned to the respective schools' curricula, and they must complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and "positive youth development" of the students. Positive youth development refers to a philosophy and approach to working with young people that recognizes that (1) multiple domains of young people's development (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and moral) are interconnected; (2) all young people have strengths and prior knowledge that serve as a platform for subsequent development; and (3) young people are active agents of their own growth and development.

- I. **High School Credit:** In some circumstances, 21st CCLC program funds may be used to offer programs or activities for which participants may receive credit toward high school graduation. Funds used for this purpose must supplement and not supplant other federal, state, and locally funded programs. In other words, 21st CCLC funds may not be used to pay for activities or programs that are otherwise provided from other state of Illinois funds in the absence of the 21st CCLC program.

The following criteria apply to programs and activities for which participants may receive credit toward high school graduation requirements:

- The program or activity is an expansion of the options for receiving high school credit in a particular area that is unable to be provided in the regular school program; and
- The program or activity does not replace or reduce the courses and programs normally provided by a school district or private school (e.g., there is no reduction in the course offerings or costs in the particular academic area).

All Illinois school districts are required to provide sufficient coursework during the regular school day that is necessary for students to meet the state graduation requirements set forth in [Section 27-22](#) of the School Code. For this reason, applicants are advised to carefully consider which courses may be offered by the 21st CCLC program to be counted toward high school graduation. The federal guidance regarding supplanting indicates that the courses must be those not offered in the regular school program and would not have otherwise been available without funding from the 21st CCLC program. All courses provided for graduation credit must be taught by individuals who are appropriately licensed/qualified to teach the courses.

The 21st CCLC funds also may be used to offer summer school programs for students who failed required courses during the regular school term to retake the courses for credit toward graduation.

Applicants proposing to offer high school courses for credit must complete Attachment 7.

- J. **Hours of Operation:** Applicants should propose programming based on the needs of families within the community. Therefore, centers should establish consistent and dependable hours of operation. Research suggests that high-quality programs typically provide a minimum of 36 weeks of programming per project year, not including summer programming. 21st CCLC programs funded under this NOFO, however, must operate **a minimum of 12 hours a week for a minimum of 28 weeks per year**. Applicants are encouraged to propose services that exceed the minimum operational requirements and aim for the higher standards established by research. See Expanding Minds and Opportunities Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success. Any proposed summer programming will be considered in addition to the 12-hour, 28-week requirement and will have a 12-hour per week, three-week minimum requirement.
- K. **Student Attendance:** Programming should be consistent and not a drop-in program. Students will need to attend 45 hours or more during the program year to be considered regular attendees. ISBE expects 80 percent or more of students served to be regular attendees.
- L. **Secular Programs:** All programs and services provided to students and their families must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological. 21st CCLC program funds may not be expended to support religious practices, such as religious instruction, worship, or prayer. FBOs can apply for and operate 21st CCLC programs on the same basis as other private organizations, so long as the **services delivered with grant funds are secular, neutral, and non-ideological**. All programs, including FBOs, must comply by using applicable

cost accounting practices in accordance with 23 Illinois Administrative Code 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing) as established by policy in the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures handbook.

The following types of religious activities are prohibited in 21st CCLC programs:

- Bible verses for handwriting,
- Praying before snack,
- Memory exercises with religious verses,
- Bible trivia, and
- Spelling religious words.

M. **Family Services:** For purposes of this program, the terms “family” and “parent” include caregivers; guardians; or others, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings of the mother and father, who act in the stead of parents. 21st CCLC programs may provide ongoing services to the families of children who are served in the program.

Services provided with 21st CCLC funds to adult family members must be meaningful and ongoing. Accordingly, services that are episodic or non-recurring, such as Family Nights and special events, do not fulfill the mission of the program and should not be proposed for funding. Examples of services that may be funded by 21st CCLC include, but are not limited to, English as a second language classes, literacy and numeracy classes, General Education Development test preparation classes, computer classes, citizen preparation classes, social services, and recreational and enrichment opportunities.

Services for family members may be provided during the school day, if this is the most appropriate time to do so. *The total hours and days of family services, however, must not exceed the hours and days of the student activities.*

N. **Prekindergarten Services:** 21st CCLC programs may provide services for prekindergarten children. School-aged students are designated in statute as the intended beneficiaries of the program, but ED allows younger children who will become students in the schools that are served by the program to receive services. Proposed prekindergarten activities must be designed to prepare the preschool children to succeed in school.

O. **Equitable Participation of Private and Public School Students:** Students, teachers, and other educational personnel are eligible to participate in 21st CCLC programs on an equitable basis. A public school or other public or private entity that is awarded a grant must provide equitable services to private and public school students and their families. Grantees designing a program that meets this requirement must provide comparable opportunities for the participation of both private and public school students in the area served by the grant. Thus, a private school that is awarded a grant must provide equitable services to the public school students and families and vice versa.

Applicants must consult with private and public school officials during the design and development of the 21st CCLC program on certain issues, such as how the children’s needs will be identified and what services will be offered. The applicants should provide services that will meet those needs, such as, but not limited to, tutoring, social emotional, math, and reading reinforcement. (See Attachments 6A and 6B.) Services and benefits provided to private school students must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological. Private schools may apply for this grant and are likewise held to the standard requirements of equitable participation and timely and meaningful consultation. Please refer to the [Title VIII, Part F of the Elementary and](#)

Secondary Education Act of 1965: Equitable Services for Eligible Private School Children, Teachers, and Other Educational Personnel, Non-Regulatory Guidance.

Private school grantees must provide equitable access to the program for all public school students and their families who reside in the geographic area of the private school, and vice versa. Private schools, where applicable, must consult with public schools (Attachment 6B); public schools, where applicable, must consult with private schools (Attachment 6A).

- P. **Professional Development:** 21st CCLC funds are available for professional development activities that support the delivery of high-quality programs. Applicants may propose professional development activities pursuant to the needs of their programs. Specifically, grant funds may be used to support professional development activities for 21st CCLC program staff to ensure that all have access to and the opportunity for participation in professional development activities that provide curriculum integration and instructional methods that can enhance student learning.

Requests to attend national conferences, other than the 21st CCLC Summer Symposium, must receive prior approval from ISBE. All requests must be made using the designated out-of-state travel form at least 45 days prior to using grant funds for this purpose. All out-of-state travel must receive prior approval from ISBE.

ISBE will also provide professional development opportunities to increase statewide capacity for delivering 21st CCLC services. ISBE-sponsored workshops and trainings are designed to improve the quality of the program and to give technical assistance to program staff for continuous improvement. All grantees must attend ISBE-sponsored workshops and trainings. Applicants are advised to include funding requests in their proposals appropriate to the travel costs associated with attendance at required professional development activities. ISBE will host at least two workshops/trainings per fiscal year.

At its discretion, ISBE may provide a peer mentor in an effort to assist first-year grantees with program implementation. The peer mentor's duties include, but are not limited to, providing training and technical assistance to the grantees, making required site visits to local programs throughout the year, and providing regional workshops. Assignment of a mentor is in addition to participation in required workshops and trainings and is done at no additional cost to the grantees.

ED's 21st CCLC National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC) website provides relevant professional development, technical assistance, resources, and other tools to 21st CCLC program staff. Please see the archived You for Youth resources on NTAC's website for previously provided professional learning materials. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate ED's 21st CCLC National Technical Assistance Center website or other applicable offerings into their professional development plan.

Evaluation and Monitoring

A. Measures of Effectiveness:

1. A program or activity developed pursuant to this part must meet the measures of effectiveness as monitored by ISBE. Such program or activity shall:
 - a. Be based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for before-and afterschool (or summer recess) programs and activities in the schools and communities;
 - b. Be based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic enrichment opportunities;

- c. If appropriate, be based upon evidence-based research that the program or activity will help students meet the challenging state academic standards and any local academic standards;
 - d. Ensure that measures of student success align with the regular academic program of the school and the academic needs of participating students and include performance indicators and measures; and
 - e. Collect the data necessary for the measures of student success described in paragraph (D).
2. Periodic evaluation must be conducted to assess the program's progress toward achieving the goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment and overall student success.

Use of Results: The results of evaluations under subparagraph (A) shall be:

- a. Used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program or activity, and to refine the performance measures;
- b. Made available to the public upon request, with public notice of such availability provided; and
- c. Used by the state to determine whether a subgrant is eligible to be eligible for continuation.

B. Program Evaluation: The statute governing 21st CCLC programs requires each state to develop performance indicators and performance measures that it will use to evaluate the programs and activities. Illinois' objectives and measures can be found in the Program Objectives section on page 8. Accordingly, each grantee will be required to participate in the state evaluation process and to submit a local evaluation report on a timeline prescribed by ISBE. The evaluation requirements are provided below.

1. **State Evaluation:** Illinois began its statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC programs during the 2005-06 school year. It has since provided recommendations for improvements in the implementation of projects at the local level and in the provision of technical assistance and professional development at the state level. All grantees are required to participate in all processes required for the state evaluation, including but not limited to data collection processes, site visits, and interviews.
2. **Local Evaluation:** Grantees are required to annually evaluate programs funded with 21st CCLC funds. At minimum, the local evaluation must assess the quality of the academic enrichment component; the scope, substance, and quality of the programming; and the relationship between program offerings and the academic progress of the children enrolled in the 21st CCLC program. The evaluation must also be based on the "measures of effectiveness." At a minimum, grantees must evaluate local efforts toward the accomplishment of the statewide goals and objectives and the local goals and objectives submitted as part of the initial grant proposal. (See Attachment 8.) Local goals and objectives must align to the state performance objectives provided in the Program Objectives section on page 8. The local evaluation should follow the template provided annually on the [ISBE 21st CCLC webpage](#).

The results of the local evaluation must be:

- A. Used to show progress toward meeting program goals and objectives;
- B. Used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program;
- C. Submitted to ISBE when requested to inform the statewide evaluation; and
- D. Made available to the public upon request.

To this end, local evaluation plans must be designed to document and demonstrate the successes and challenges of the program with regard to increased academic achievement of the students who participate in the program. The plan must, at a minimum, include the following information and be submitted as part of the proposal. (See Attachment 13M.)

- A. Indicate who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation (i.e., name of individual and/or company) along with rationale for selecting evaluator;
- B. Have a compelling rationale for the selected evaluation approach;
- C. Be technically sound with regard to the evaluation design and measurement of the program toward goals and objectives;
- D. Be clearly tied to the state and local goals and objectives;
- E. Describe the methods to be used to gather, organize, summarize, analyze, and present data;
- F. Identify the quantitative and qualitative data to be collected. Describe and/or include the data collection tools, if applicable. Data collection efforts must be aligned to Illinois' 21st CCLC goals, objectives, performance measures, targets, and performance standards as outlined in the Program Objectives, Performance Measures, Targets, and Performance Standards, of this NOFO and aligned to local goals and objectives as submitted in Attachment 8 of the NOFO forms;
- G. Facilitate the collection of both formative and summative evaluation data;
- H. Provide the organizational structures that will be employed to oversee the evaluation process;
- I. Indicate how the resulting recommendations will be incorporated into the program on an annual basis for continuous improvement; and
- J. Describe the process to disseminate the evaluation results to the target audiences.

The cost for the local evaluation must be included in the budget submitted with the proposal. Grant funds should be used primarily to provide services to students, so the cost of the evaluation shall not exceed 10 percent of the overall budget. Grantees are encouraged to select an external evaluator, but at a minimum, the evaluator must be an individual who is not affiliated with the 21st CCLC program.

Further information about state and local evaluations can be found in section F of ED's [Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance](#). The guidance is intended as a comprehensive document to help SEAs and their subgrantees meet statutory requirements.

- C. **Program Monitoring:** Each grantee will be assessed for financial and programmatic risk through GATA as well as monitored for implementation and program fidelity by ISBE. Grantees will be required to participate in biannual calls, desktop monitoring, and/or onsite monitoring. In addition, some grantees may be identified for financial monitoring conducted by ISBE's Federal and State Monitoring Department. Monitors will check program compliance and adherence to the activities outlined in the original proposals submitted by the grantees. The results of the monitoring visit will also be considered in determining the continuation of funding in subsequent years of the grant.

Additionally, each grantee will be required to complete a spring program survey and regular data submission to the tool developed by ISBE to provide data for the Annual Performance Report (APR) that includes required data collection through the federal reporting system as specified by ED. APR data gathering may include surveys of students, parents, and teachers; a comparison of students' grades; and collection of state assessment scores. ISBE will provide workshops and technical support to assist grantees with the completion of the required APR.

Grantees that expend \$1,000,000 or more a fiscal year in total combined federal funds must have a single or program-specific audit conducted in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart F Uniform Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). Information on federal single audits can be obtained on the ISBE [Federal and State Monitoring webpage](#). Where applicable, grantees must submit these audits to ISBE at the end of each fiscal year of the grant.

Failure to comply with any of the above requirements within the timeframe specified by ISBE may result in monitoring findings and potentially a loss of continuation funds. Funds may be frozen until such time that the requirements are fulfilled.

Community Connections

- A. **Community Partnerships:** 21st CCLC programs are strongly encouraged to establish collaborative partnerships with community organizations. The purpose of these partnerships is to provide children and their families with opportunities to take advantage of community resources. Alternatively, the partnerships can provide community residents the opportunity to volunteer their time and share their expertise to help students achieve academic standards and master new skills. Applicants must give a 45-day prior notice to the community of their intent to submit an application for a 21st CCLC grant in an effort to generate community partnerships. Notification to the community can be made concurrent with proposal submission. Notification must be disseminated to the community in a manner that is understandable and accessible. The community should be aware that this notice is not a guarantee that an award will be received; it is only the intent to apply. This communication can be accomplished through venues such as newspapers, public websites, social media, and community meetings. Evidence of this action is not required to be submitted as part of the proposal; however, applicants that are awarded a grant must maintain evidence/documentation of the community notice for monitoring purposes.

Once partnerships have been determined, applicants should execute letters of agreement with those entities that will serve as community partners in the 21st CCLC program and include roles and responsibilities of each entity. These letters can be submitted as an attachment to the proposal as evidence of a commitment to partner with community organizations. The letters should describe the roles and responsibilities of the partners in the 21st CCLC, including any cash or in-kind services. The letters should indicate the names of the partners and be signed by the partners' chief executive officers or persons authorized to commit the partner's staff and/or resources to the center.

Memorandum of Understanding: All applicants must document the commitment to a partnership for the implementation of the 21st CCLC program in an MOU. **The MOU must be established and signed by the LEA superintendent, the principal at each school to be served by the grant, and any other organization included as a co-applicant. If the LEA applicant is unable to partner with another eligible entity in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality, the LEA must upload a letter that demonstrates their efforts to identify and obtain a co-applicant and an explanation of why they were unable to partner. An MOU still must be established and signed by the LEA superintendent and the principal to be served by the grant.** The MOU must outline the terms of the agreement, including the services that will be provided, designation of responsibilities, timelines for actions, and all financial arrangements. All applicants, regardless of co-applicant status, should obtain an MOU or agreement to formally outline planning, spatial and communication responsibilities between the school district, schools being served, and any partners. All MOUs must be submitted with the proposal as Attachment 14A. **Applications that do not include an MOU at time of submission will not be scored.**

At a minimum, the MOU must include the following information:

- A. A description of the collaboration among the LEA, the school to be served, and the co-applicants, if applicable, regarding the planning and design of the program;
- B. An assurance that the 21st CCLC program was developed together with the LEA, the building principals, and the teachers, and that the program will be carried out in collaboration with all parties;
- C. A description of the LEA, the school to be served, and co-applicant's, if applicable, role in the delivery of services;
- D. An explanation of how resources will be shared to carry out the LEA, school, and co-applicant's, if applicable, roles;

- E. An explanation of how the LEA, school, and co-applicant, if applicable, will have significant and ongoing involvement in the management and oversight of the program;
- F. A description of how the students will be chosen for the program;
- G. A clear description of the linkage between the school day and the 21st CCLC programming; and
- H. A description of how and when data, surveys, and information about the 21st CCLC will be collected, compiled, and shared over the term of the grant, including surveys of students, parents, and teachers; a comparison of students' grades for the first and fourth quarters; and the collection of state assessment scores.

Services provided by a co-applicant within the grant and as required by the assurances and the terms of the grant should be provided in partnership and neither party should benefit or profit from services provided or required within the grant.

- B. **Sustainability Plan:** Applicants are required to submit a program sustainability plan that describes how the 21st CCLC program will be continued after the grant funding has ended. Attachment 13R is provided for the submission of the sustainability plan.

Applicants must take into account the resources available within the community and explain how they plan to maintain their funded programs when 21st CCLC funding ends. Applicants must project other sources of funding (e.g., grants received, donations, in-kind services, and fundraising efforts) to continue the program and include the information as part of the sustainability plan submitted with the proposal. Attachment 13R is provided for this purpose.

ISBE encourages sustaining programming for the size and scope of the funded programs, including a minimum of 12 hours of weekly programming for a period of at least 28 weeks. ISBE recognizes that sustaining a program might include a decrease in size and scope. Applicants should carefully consider what components of programming may be sustained upon conclusion of funding.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/21st-Century-Program-Income-Guidance.pdf>

Funding Information

Introduction:

All grant funds disbursed to administer the 21st CCLC program and all related services must be handled in accordance with the authorizing legislation; the corresponding federal guidance; the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures](#) handbook; and [23 Illinois Administrative Code 100](#) (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing). Funding levels during the grant period for new grantees and previously funded grantees are anticipated as follows.

Total available grant funds will not exceed \$25.0 million in FY 2027, \$25.0 million in FY 2028, and \$25.0 million in FY 2029. **There will be no renewability of awards under this NOFO beyond the initial three-year grant term.**

Indirect Cost Rate:

The federal Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 requires that grantees be provided the opportunity to seek indirect cost reimbursements based on negotiated indirect cost reimbursement rates. Rates are determined and applied as follows.

Local Education Agencies

- Local Education Agency (LEA) indirect cost rates are developed in accordance with a delegation of authority agreement between ISBE and the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The plan includes both a restricted and unrestricted rate for each individual LEA. Both the restricted and unrestricted LEA rates are published annually on the [ISBE Indirect Cost Rate Plan webpage](#). In the past, only the restricted rate was allowed when budgeting indirect cost reimbursements.

LEAs have the ability to seek indirect cost reimbursement at the published unrestricted rate for any program other than those identified as restricted by ED.

- Newly organized LEAs, Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, area vocational centers, charter schools, university laboratory schools, and governmental entities formed by a joint agreement among LEAs utilize either the statewide average of LEA unrestricted or restricted indirect rates as appropriate, depending on program.
- LEAs that jointly administer federal program(s) utilize either the approved unrestricted or restricted indirect cost rates for the administrative district of the joint program as appropriate, depending on program.

Non-LEAs

- Programs eligible for an unrestricted indirect cost rate; not-for-profit entities; community-/faith-based organizations; and other non-LEA subgrantees utilize rates negotiated through the Governor's Office of Management and Budget centralized process wherein which they will have the option to:
 - o Select the 15% de minimis rate.
 - o Submit documentation supporting a rate determined via negotiation with their federal cognizant agency.
 - o Negotiate a rate.

Non-LEA, non-university grantees may initiate the unrestricted indirect cost rate negotiation process via the [GATA Grantee Portal](#).

- Federal programs requiring the use of a restricted indirect cost rate, not-for-profit entities, community-/faith-based organizations, and other non-LEA subgrantees shall utilize the 8% default rate described at 34 CFR 76.564.

- Colleges and universities will be limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8% or other indirect cost rate calculated by their cognizant federal agency, whichever is less, for state grants administered by ISBE.

Costs associated with Fiscal Support Services (2520), Internal Support Services (2570), Staff Support Services (2640), Data Processing Services (2660), and Direction of Business Support Services (2510) charged to the Educational Fund are properly budgeted as indirect costs.

Funding Restrictions:

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is a **federally restricted indirect cost program**. Program budgets must supplement not supplant other federal and state funds. The budget shall specify that no more than 5 percent of the total grant award shall be used for administrative and general expenses (General Administration 2300).

A budget outlining projected costs of the 21st CCLC program must be included in the proposal. Proposed expenditures must align with the proposed activities, the number of students and families to be served, staffing levels, goals and objectives, and the evaluation of the project. All expenditures must be reasonable and necessary to carry out the program's purpose, goals, and objectives, and all funds must be spent in accordance with the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures handbook](#). The obligation of funds shall not begin until after the official notification of a grant award.

Applicants may submit any number of applications; however, only their three top scoring applications will be eligible for funding. Funded applications cannot exceed \$600,000 each.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Grant funds may be used to provide the types of programs and activities explained in the Program Specifications section beginning on page 11 of this NOFO. Accordingly, 21st CCLC grant funds may be used for the following:

1. **Program Implementation Costs:** Supplies and materials necessary to implement the program may be proposed.
2. **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs may be requested for some 21st CCLC activities. Indirect costs are subject to the indirect costs rate established by ISBE. For more information on the guidance for indirect costs, review the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures handbook](#).
3. **Administration Costs:** General administration costs (i.e., Function 2300), which are direct costs associated with the overall administration of the 21st CCLC program, may be proposed. These costs, however, must be limited to not more than 5 percent of the total funding request. Applicants are advised to refer to the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures handbook](#) for budget information.
4. **Professional Development Costs:** ISBE will host at least two workshops/trainings per fiscal year.

Funds may be requested to provide professional development activities for program staff; however, any out-of-state travel proposed by the applicant must be approved by ISBE 45 days prior to the event.

Funds necessary for attendance at the required professional development workshops and trainings hosted by ISBE must be included in the budget proposal. Applicants should include travel costs associated with required workshops as well as other professional development opportunities they wish to provide for staff.

Travel expenses associated with professional development must be processed in accordance with either the written and official travel policy of the fiscal agent or the state's travel policy. The state's travel policy, including mileage and, where overnight stay is required, lodging and per diem, is governed by the Governor's Travel Control Board and is outlined in the [Reimbursement Schedule of the Travel Guide for State Employees](#) and any annual changes found therein.

5. **Instructional Staff Costs:** Funds may be requested to cover expenses for instructional staff who work directly with students. Job descriptions are required for each position that is proposed to be paid with funds from a 21st CCLC grant. Include the job descriptions in your proposal in a document labeled Attachment 13O. Funds also may be requested to pay staff for pre- and post-program planning activities. Payment for pre- and post-planning purposes, however, must not exceed four weeks of work within each fiscal year commensurate to each employee's typical weekly work schedule. In other words, a staff member who works 20 hours per week would be eligible for up to 80 total hours of pre- and post-planning employment with 21st CCLC program funds.
6. **Food Costs:** Funds to purchase food are **only** allowed for the following two purposes.
 - A. Meetings that take place during regular mealtime hours **and** include family members. The purpose of this line item is to encourage parent/family participation. The maximum allowable expense is \$10 per person served. Food costs may be included in the Federal Budget Summary (Attachment 9) under Community Services - Function 3000 and Object 400. The Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 10) must include detailed itemization regarding the anticipated numbers of people to be served at each event.
 - B. Use in culinary classes. Food costs may be included in the Federal Budget Summary (Attachment 9) under Instruction - Function 1000 and Object 400. The Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 10) must include detailed itemization regarding the anticipated costs relative to the proposed courses as described in the proposal narrative.

Grantees are encouraged to seek other sources of funding for snacks and meals for students, if necessary. The U.S. Department of Agriculture sponsors the After-School Care Program as part of the National School Lunch Program. The program offers cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth in our communities. More information can be found on [ISBE's Afterschool Snacks and Meals](#) webpage for various links regarding the snack program.

7. **Transportation Costs:** Applicants will ensure that students participating in the program carried out by the community learning center will travel safely to and from the center and home. Program funds may be used to cover reasonable transportation costs for program participants. Requests for transportation costs must be clearly and appropriately related to 21st CCLC program activities.
8. **Technology Costs:** Funds to purchase technology used in 21st CCLC programs are restricted to the purchase of equipment **for 21st CCLC student or family use only**, such as computers, laptops, printers, scanners, televisions, digital cameras, tablets, or similar items, **and** must be (1) reasonable, (2) allocable, (3) allowable, and (4) directly related to academics and student achievement. All purchased technology is only for use during 21st CCLC programming and should be supported by educational lesson plans connecting use to student achievement that can be

provided to ISBE upon request. Prior approval from ISBE is required for the purchase of all technology.

Computers purchased with multiple licenses are considered to be technology. Applicants are advised that pursuant to Section 80.32 of the [Education Department General Administrative Regulations](#), grantees must conduct an inventory of equipment purchased with grant funds at least every two years and reconcile that information with property records.

9. **Subcontracting Costs:** Funds may be used to enter into subcontracting agreements for the provision of 21st CCLC program activities that are beyond the capacity of the grantee. Subcontracted services may include evaluation services. No subcontracting is allowed without prior written approval of the State Superintendent or their designee. This information must also be provided on the Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 10) for ISBE approval prior to the execution of services.

Funds for services provided by subcontractors typically include direct instruction to students (Function 1000, Object 300); teacher professional development (Function 2210, Object 300); and services by a governmental entity (Function 4000, Object 300). The [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures](#) handbook provides further information about budget coding.

10. **Program Evaluation Costs:** Funds should be allocated to pay for costs associated with participating in the state evaluation and conducting the local evaluation. Funds proposed for evaluation purposes must be reasonable when compared to other proposed costs. Grant funds should be used primarily to provide services to students, so the cost of the evaluation should not exceed 10 percent of the overall budget. Grantees may subcontract for local program evaluation services (Function 2620, Object 300).

Non-Allowable Uses of Funds: 21st CCLC grant awardees **shall not** use 21st CCLC grant funds for the following:

1. Proposal preparation costs;
2. Pre-award costs without written approval (*see* 2 CFR § 200.458);
3. Overnight or out-of-state travel for students;
4. Food, including daily snacks and/or meals for students;
5. Food for professional development events, faculty, staff, administrative meetings, or for staff in any setting other than described under the Allowable Uses of Funds section beginning on page 22;
6. Clothing;
7. Purchase of equipment, such as computers, laptops, DVD players, printers, scanners, fax machines, telephones, cell phones, televisions, digital cameras, or similar items, regardless of cost unless prior approval has been given by ISBE;
8. Incentives of cash, clothing, gas cards, gift cards, movie passes, or other incentives that are not reasonable in proportion to the amount of funding;
9. Furniture;
10. Staff events that include retreats, lock-ins, or other events of a similar nature;
11. Field trips that are purely recreational in nature (field trips without academic support will be considered entertainment and cannot be funded);
12. Membership dues to organizations, federations, or societies for students or staff;
13. Promotional or marketing items (e.g., flags, banners, mugs, pens, totes);

14. Decorative items;
15. Capital improvements, such as facility construction, remodeling, or renovation;
16. Classes previously offered and paid for by district or other fund sources; and
17. Supplanting federal, state, or local funds.

Continuation Funding: Continuation funding for years two and three of the grant period will be based on the grantee's progress toward meeting the objectives stated in the approved proposal.

Grants will not be automatically continued. Grantees that want to receive continued funding will be required to complete an annual Continuation Application provided by ISBE and submit an annual written project evaluation no later than Dec. 1. (See Program Evaluation beginning on page 18.) The results of any monitoring efforts, including a risk analysis, will also be considered in determining eligibility for continued funding. Programs that do not improve student outcomes will also be considered in determining eligibility for continued funding.

Grantees that fall within a higher risk level, as determined by the monitoring risk analysis, may be asked to submit and comply with a corrective action plan for improvement. Grantees that continue to fail in demonstrating substantial annual progress in implementation during the final years of the grant and/or do not submit the Continuation Application with an approvable budget and required documentation in a timely manner may not receive a funding allocation or may receive a reduced funding allocation in the following fiscal year of the grant cycle. Grantees should submit the Continuation Application by or before the posted deadline; corrections to applications that have been disapproved should be resubmitted to ISBE within 14 business days. Grantees may submit explanations regarding the inability to meet their goals. ISBE will take this information into consideration when determining the reallocation.

Budget submissions will be reviewed routinely to ensure appropriate use of funds. Unspent funds at the end of each fiscal year may result in a decrease in grantee allocations in subsequent years of the grant cycle.

Supplanting: Grantees must use program funds for the purpose intended and to supplement and not supplant other federal, state, and local funds. This prohibition includes using funds awarded under this grant competition for any activities and programs currently funded with 21st CCLC grant funds. The supplanting prohibition does not, however, prohibit 21st CCLC funds under this NOFO from being used to continue programs where a previous federal grant has ended and other federal, state, or local funds are no longer available.

Coordination of Resources: Each applicant must be a good steward of public funds and take action to prevent the duplication of services. As such, applicants should identify other federal, state, and local programs that offer before and after-school and summer services and work to coordinate and/or combine efforts for the most effective use of public resources.

Flexibility of Funding: LEAs are provided certain flexibilities in the use of 21st CCLC funds under ESSA. These flexibilities are described below.

1. **Consolidation of Local Administrative Funds:** LEAs may get approval from ISBE to consolidate administrative funds with any other administrative funds available from ESSA programs, consistent with the administrative provisions established for each program. Such

consolidation may enhance the effective and coordinated use of administrative funds under the consolidated programs.

2. **Programs:** LEAs are permitted to consolidate and use funds from Title I Part A; Title IV Part B (i.e., 21st CCLC); and other ESSA program funds received at the school to upgrade the entire educational program of a school that serves a school attendance area where not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families or where not less than 40 percent of the children enrolled in the school are from such families. These schools are otherwise recognized under Section 1114 of ESSA as schoolwide programs and are eligible to consolidate their federal, state, and local funds accordingly. Under this provision, however, schools are still responsible for implementing the activities for which they received the 21st CCLC funds and would have to be part of the individual school's Schoolwide Plan and the District Title I Plan prior to consolidating funds.
3. **Rural Education Initiatives:** LEAs eligible for the Rural Education Achievement Program may use their "applicable funding" (funds received under the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, Educational Technology State Grants, State Grants for Innovative Programs, and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program) to carry out activities authorized under the 21st CCLC, Title I Part A, Title III, or any of these particular programs.

All applicants and co-applicants must individually comply with all applicable state and federal laws; regulations; and executive orders, including without limitation those regarding the confidentiality of student records, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and the Illinois School Student Records Act (105 ILCS 10/1 et seq.), and those prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap, such as Title IX of the Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.), the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (29 U.S.C. 621 et seq.), and Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.). **Further, all co-applicants participating in a joint application must certify that they are individually and jointly responsible to ISBE and to the administrative agent for the grant.**

The entity serving as the administrative agent (i.e., the applicant) must certify via the Program-Specific Assurance Pages (found on application once awarded the grant) that it is responsible for administering the grant program; all related services, including all reports; and all funds in accordance with the authorizing legislation, the corresponding federal guidance, the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures](#) handbook, and [23 Illinois Administrative Code 100](#) (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing) and that it will specifically conduct the following fiscal activities:

1. If awarded the grant, provide fully executed Program-Specific Assurance Pages to ISBE as part of the completed application via IWAS.
2. Maintain separate accounts and ledgers for the project.
3. Provide a proper accounting of all revenue from ISBE for the project pursuant to 23 Illinois Administrative Code 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing).
4. Properly post all expenditures made on behalf of the project.

5. Be responsible for the accountability, documentation, and cash management of the project; the approval and payment of all expenses, obligations, and contracts; and the hiring of personnel on behalf of the project in accordance with the executed grant agreement.
6. Disburse all funds to joint applicants in accordance with the executed grant agreement (i.e., approved budget).
7. Require joint applicants to report expenditures to the fiscal agent based on actual expenditures and obligations. Require appropriate fiscal documentation from all joint applicants.
8. Submit all financial reports to ISBE to reflect actual expenditures and/or obligations for the fiscal agent and the joint applicants.
9. Make financial records available to outside auditors and ISBE personnel, as requested.
10. Establish a recovery-of-funds process with all joint applicants for the collection of any funds that must be returned to ISBE.
11. Be responsible for the payment of any funds that are to be returned to ISBE.

Stevens Amendment:

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of Public Law 101-166 (the Stevens Amendment), applicants are advised that 100% of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is 100%.

Reporting Requirements

Periodic financial reporting should be completed at a minimum of quarterly via the IWAS system. Programmatic reporting should be completed at a minimum of semiannually via the 21st CCLC biannual call and corresponding data information form. Additional reporting requirements are listed below.

Grantees are required to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) that describes participant information, project activities, staffing, participation, and outcomes. All information related to the APR must be entered into the MyIRC system three times per year during data entry windows determined by ISBE. The MyIRC system is a password protected data entry website that allows ISBE to collect data from 21st CCLC programs. ISBE then transmits data into ED's 21st CCLC electronic 21APR system. A grantee's failure to provide data based on the timeline provided by ISBE may result in the freezing of funds until the information is completed. The dual purpose of the APR is to:

- A. Demonstrate that substantial progress has been made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the project.
- B. Collect data that addresses the performance indicators for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. This will be aligned with the integrated evaluation system that ISBE has developed. Grantees are also required to conduct needs assessments and parent and student satisfaction surveys.

Program Assurances:

Awarded applicants will be required to agree to ALL of the assurances provided below. By submitting this proposal, the applicant acknowledges that such assurances will be required and intends to agree to such assurances upon being awarded.

- The applicant assures the timely notice of intent to apply to the community and that the application and any waiver request will be available for public review after submission of the application.
- The applicant assures that the program will target students who primarily attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs and their families.
- The applicant assures that the proposed program will be developed and carried out in collaboration with all participants and their respective schools, as well as in partnership with the eligible entities.

- The applicant assures that it has established a process for consulting with private schools about grant opportunities and the availability of equitable services for eligible private school students.
 - The applicant assures that the program will take place in a safe and easily accessible facility.
 - The applicant assures that a plan is established for implementing extended learning time, if applicable.
 - The applicant assures that the proposed program will be in alignment with the challenging state academic standards and any local standards.
 - The applicant assures that program funds will supplement and not supplant other federal, state, local, and nonpublic funds to provide allowable programs and activities.
 - Subcontracting: No subcontracts or subgrants are allowed without prior written approval of the state superintendent of education. If subcontracts or subgrants are allowed, then all project responsibilities are to be retained by the grantee to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. All subcontracts and subgrants must be documented and must have the prior written approval of the state superintendent of education. Approval of subcontracts and subgrants shall be subject to the same criteria as are applied to the original proposal/application. The following information is required if any subcontracts/subgrants are to be utilized:
 - Name(s) and address(es) of subcontractor(s)/subgrantee(s);
 - Need and purpose for each subcontract/subgrant;
 - Measurable and time specific services to be provided;
 - Associated costs (i.e., amounts to be paid under each subcontract/subgrant); and
 - Projected number of participants to be served.
 - The grantee may not assign, convey, or transfer its rights to the grant award without the prior written consent of ISBE.
1. The program will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications:
 - A. The control of funds provided under the program and title to property acquired with program funds will be in a public agency or in a nonprofit private agency, institution, organization, or Indian tribe if the law authorizing the program provides for assistance to those entities; and
 - B. The public agency, nonprofit private agency, institution, or organization, or Indian tribe will administer the funds and property to the extent required by the authorizing statutes.
 2. The applicant will adopt and use proper methods of administering each such program, including:
 - A. The enforcement of any obligations imposed by law on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and
 - B. The correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring, or evaluation.
 3. The applicant will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of the program conducted by or for the State Education Agency, the secretary, or other federal officials.
 4. The applicant will use such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures as will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, federal funds paid to the applicant under each such program.
 5. The applicant will:
 - A. Submit such reports to ISBE (which shall make the reports available to the governor) and the secretary as the State Education Agency and secretary may require to enable the State Education Agency and the secretary to perform their duties under each such program; and
 - B. Maintain such records, provide such information, and afford such access to the records as ISBE (after consultation with the governor) or the secretary may reasonably require to carry out the duties of the State Education Agency or the Secretary.
 6. Before the application was submitted, the applicant afforded a reasonable opportunity for public comment on the application and considered such comment.
 7. The before- or after-school program will take place in a safe and easily accessible facility. The grantee will ensure that any program to be located in a facility other than an elementary or secondary school is at least as accessible to the students to be served as if the program were located in an elementary or secondary school. The learning center will make available a description of how the students participating in the program carried out by the community learning center will travel

- safely to and from the center and home. Buildings that house the 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs will meet local standards and codes for public facilities. Indoor and outdoor facilities must be safe and in good repair.
8. The grantee will ensure that students participating in the program carried out by the community learning center will travel safely to and from the center and home. Program funds may be used to cover reasonable transportation costs for program participants. If transportation is provided, the transportation plan must be clearly and appropriately related to project activities.
 9. Funds under this part will be used to increase the level of state, local, and other nonfederal funds that would, in the absence of funds under Title IV Part B be made available for programs and activities authorized under this part, and in no case supplant federal, state, local, or non-federal funds.
 10. The program will primarily target students who attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs under Title I Section 1114 and the families of such students.
 11. Applicants will give notice to the community of the intent to submit an application. The application and any waiver request will be made available for public review and after submission of the application.
 12. The program will be developed and carried out in active collaboration with the schools the students attend. At a minimum, grantees will have a letter of collaboration from each school that will have students participating in 21st CCLC activities. Each school will acknowledge its willingness to provide the program with, at a minimum, copies of participating student grade records, school attendance records, and information regarding whether or not the participating students were promoted to the next grade level as well as facilitate attainment of state assessment scores and surveys of teachers. Schools will receive parental/guardian consent before school records are submitted to the 21st CCLC.
 13. The organization selected for funding will meet all statutory and regulatory requirements of this program. In order to ensure that a local grantee, including faith-based organizations, meets the purposes and criteria of the program, it shall not discriminate against beneficiaries on the basis of religion. Funds shall be used solely for the purposes set forth in this grant program. No funds provided pursuant to this program shall be expended to support religious practices, such as religious instruction, worship, or prayer. FBOs may offer such practices, but not as part of the program receiving assistance, and FBOs shall comply with generally accepted cost accounting requirements to ensure that funds are not used to support these activities.
 14. Grantees will keep attendance records of program participants. Participants are required to be enrolled in the before- or after-school program. Drop-in services cannot be funded by 21st CCLC program funds. Grantees are expected to maintain attendance at the level for which funding is requested. Enrollment and retention activities should be described in the proposal.
 15. Grantees will conduct criminal background checks for all program staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children and youth. Grantees are required to have a written protocol on file requiring background checks, as well as evidence of their completion. Further, no person shall be employed who has been convicted of a crime as listed in Section 10-21.9(c) of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/12-21.0(c)).
 16. In accordance with the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5), adults working with children and youth under the age of 18 years old are required to be mandated reporters for suspected child abuse and neglect. All 21st CCLC programs must have a written protocol for training their employees about the Act and identifying and reporting suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect.
 17. Grantees will obtain permission from parents or guardians of participants prior to using students for public relations purposes, gathering data by methods such as youth surveys and interviews, and obtaining academic and school data.
 18. The grantee is not delinquent in the payment of any debt to the state (or, if delinquent, has entered into a deferred payment plan to pay the debt), and acknowledges that ISBE may declare the grant agreement void if this certification is false (30 ILCS 500/50-11).

19. Grantees are required to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) that describes participant information, project activities, accomplishments, and outcomes. All information related to the APR must be entered into the 21st CCLC Benchmarking and Data Collection tool in the Illinois Report Card (MyIRC) portal. Failure to do so based on the timeline provided by ISBE may result in the freezing of funds until the information is completed. The dual purpose of the APR is to:
 - A. Demonstrate that substantial progress has been made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the project, and
 - B. Collect data that addresses the performance indicators for the 21st CCLC program. This will be aligned with the integrated evaluation system that ISBE has developed.

Grantees are also required to conduct needs assessments, parent and student satisfaction surveys, and self-assessments. Resources developing these instruments may be found at the ISBE website for 21st Century Grants.

20. Grantees will attend workshops and trainings offered by ISBE or another entity contracted by the state. The workshops and trainings are designed to improve the quality of the program and give technical assistance to the staff for continuous improvement.
21. Grantees will submit additional information as may be requested by ISBE.
22. Grantees will evaluate their programs annually as described in the approved proposal. Copies of the evaluation will be made available to ISBE or others upon request.
23. Any course offered for state-required graduation credits meets the minimum requirements of the school district that will be issuing credit for the course. Any such courses will be taught by an appropriately qualified individual, and providing this course in the before-school, after-school, or summer school setting will not reduce the number of such offerings at the school and will in no way supplant other federal, state, or local funds.
24. Funding in subsequent years of the grant shall be provided based upon the satisfactory progress of the grantee in the preceding grant period and submission to the State Board of Education of an approvable continuation application in the format that the State Board specifies. Failure of the grantee to submit the information requested by the timelines indicated in the continuation application may result in the loss of continuation funding or the freezing of funds until such times as the requirements are fulfilled.
25. Co-applicants have signed a printed copy of all grant assurances and copies with original signatures will be maintained by the primary applicant for review upon request.
26. Allocations are preliminary, and payment under this grant is subject to passage of sufficient appropriation by the Illinois General Assembly or sufficient appropriation by the U.S. Congress for federal programs. Obligations of ISBE will cease immediately without further obligation should the agency fail to receive sufficient state, federal, or other funds for this program. Funds may not be made available through renewability for every cohort; renewability and a new competition is contingent upon the availability of appropriate funds.
27. Program funds for the 21st CCLC program are intended to build a sustainable model for future programming. A sustainability plan, which includes a description of the preliminary plan for how a community learning center will continue after the federal grant ends, is required at the time of application, per Title IV Part B of ESEA as amended by ESSA. Grantees should review their previously submitted sustainability plan and make consistent progress toward a plan for continuation of programming after the grant funding has ended. Grantees should be prepared to provide an update of progress during the biannual calls.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Instructions: Each application must be submitted in the format outlined below to be considered complete. A complete application will include all required components (the numbered items below) and signatures when mentioned. Please use the checkboxes in front of the numbers as a checklist when assembling your completed application. It is advised to attach a copy of the completed checklist with the application.

☐ 1. **Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance (Attachment 1)**

Include the name, address, telephone, and fax numbers of the entity; email, name, and telephone number of the contact person; Federal Employer Identification number; Unique Entity ID (UEI) number; SAM Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code; and all other listed information. The Application page must be signed by the official authorized to submit proposals. First time applicants without an RCDT code must call or email the agency contact to obtain an RCDT code **before** submitting an application.

☐ 2. **Joint Application Agreement (Attachment 2)**

Potential applicants should review the requirements for joint applications. This completed document is necessary to receive the competitive priority points.

Note: Those entities wishing to apply to provide services to public school(s) in the city of Chicago must obtain appropriate permission via original signature from the designated official with authority to act on behalf of Chicago Public Schools District 299. Additional information required for applications proposing to serve Chicago Public Schools District 299 is posted with NOFO information on the [ISBE 21st Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) webpage.

☐ 3. **Program Summary (Attachment 3)**

Applicants should provide requested information and review requirements to receive the competitive priority points. Duplicate as needed to provide requested information about the partners involved with the program.

☐ 4. **Program Sites and Schools (Attachment 4)**

Complete the information for each proposed program site, including information about the school(s) whose students will be served at that site, for which funding is requested. Duplicate as needed.

☐ 5. **Project Service Chart (Attachment 5)**

Complete the required information for each site. Duplicate as needed.

☐ 6. **Equitable Participation of Private Schools (Attachment 6A)**

Complete as directed, including signatures from authorized officials. Duplicate as needed and as applicable. If not applicable, applicant must indicate as such and sign. If no schools to consult are in area to be served, applicant should be prepared to submit additional documentation to ISBE upon request.

☐ 7. **Equitable Participation of Public Schools (Attachment 6B)**

Complete as directed, including signatures from authorized officials. Duplicate as needed and as applicable. If not applicable, applicant must indicate as such and sign. If no schools to consult are in area to be served, applicant should be prepared to submit additional documentation to ISBE upon request.

☐ 8. **State-Required Graduation Courses (Attachment 7)**

Each applicant that proposes to provide state required courses for credit must complete Attachment 7. This attachment must be signed by both the superintendent of the district issuing credit and the fiscal agent for the proposal. If not applicable, the authorized official from the fiscal agent should indicate as such and sign.

☐ **9. Program Goals and Objectives (Attachment 8)**

Create local goals for the program that align to the seven program objectives and describe the objectives, timelines, and measurable outcomes to reach each goal. Include a strategy or activity to help achieve the objective and indicate a target date for completion. Refer to the Program Objectives section on page 8 for guidance. Address student achievement in the core academic areas as aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards, family involvement, sustainability, attendance, and participation regarding each goal. Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound (SMART). Duplicate as needed.

☐ **10. Federal Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 9)**

The budget **MUST** be submitted on this form. No other budget form will be accepted. District budgets **MUST** be signed by the district superintendent. Other applicants should have an authorized official sign the form.

☐ **11. Budget Summary Breakdown (or Narrative) (Attachment 10)**

The Budget Summary Breakdown **MUST** include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Federal Budget Summary and Payment Schedule. The Budget Summary Breakdown should also include subcontract information, if applicable.

Applicants must include funds for the required professional development provided by ISBE (up to three workshops a year and related travel costs); other professional development for staff; and program evaluation. In addition, the budget should include any funds needed for transportation of students and family programming. Applicants may refer to the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures handbook](#).

☐ **12. Program Income (Attachment 11)**

If this attachment is not applicable, an authorized official should indicate as such and sign.

☐ **13. Proposal Abstract (Attachment 12) maximum one page**

Briefly describe the overall objectives and activities of the 21st CCLC program, including students' and families' needs, the activities proposed, the intended outcomes, and key people who will be involved in the project.

☐ **14. Program Narrative (Attachments 13A-13R)**

Please provide narrative responses to the questions/prompts on each of these attachments.

Follow the specifications found under Program Narrative Requirements on page 33.

☐ **15. Applicant-Generated Documents (Attachments 14A and 14B)**

Include the following requested information as attachments to the proposal. Use provided cover sheets as directed.

Program Narrative Requirements (Attachments 13A-13R)

For Attachments 13A – 13R:

- Respond to each prompt in the space provided, ensuring your responses do not exceed the page limit specified.
- Provide your responses directly within the attachment form (i.e., do not add to or replace with other pages).
- **Portions of responses that exceed the page limit will not be read or completed.**
- Unless otherwise directed, responses should be composed in paragraph format. Including occasional bulleted lists within otherwise paragraph-formatted responses is acceptable.
- If an attachment is not applicable to your proposal, do not leave the response field blank. Enter N/A.

Attachment 13A (maximum one page)

Project: The community must be notified at least 45 days prior to submission of the proposal. Describe how information about the 21st CCLC program, including its availability and location, will be disseminated to the community in a manner that is understandable and accessible. Describe the method for outreach and a plan for securing the student's regular participation. Indicate how the entity will maintain before- and after-school programming that will meet the needs of working families and students.

Attachment 13B (maximum one page)

Management & Resources: Provide brief background information about the applying entity.

1. Provide a summary of the types of services you provide and to whom.
2. Provide evidence of the applying entity's cultural and linguistic competence to provide services as described in this proposal.
3. Provide a description of existing linkages, or a plan to establish linkages, with community resources and services, particularly the organizations addressing substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and other human services that will not be provided by the applying entity.

Attachment 13C (maximum one page)

Management & Resources: Provide a statement describing past after-school programming, whether through 21st CCLC programs or not. Include the length (per day and per year), frequency, average number of students served, and any differences between proposed services and actual services delivered. Describe the successes and challenges of the previous after-school program(s).

Attachment 13D (maximum two pages)

Need: Address the results of the needs and resources assessment. Include a gap analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the youth developmental needs and available community services. Use the gap analysis to draw conclusions and discuss how the proposed program will address the needs of the community; the students, including homeless children; neglected, delinquent, and migrant youth; and the families, including the needs of working families.

Attachment 13E (maximum two pages)

Project: Describe how the program will identify, recruit, and retain those students who are underperforming academically and most in need of academic assistance, including what criteria will be used to recommend students for services, and what process will be used to select students for participation.

Attachment 13F (maximum one page)

Need: Describe the partnership between the LEA, CBO, and any other public or private entity, and the relevance and commitment of each collaborative partner in the proposed program to the implementation and success of the project. Describe how the historical performance of each partner demonstrates its capacity to collaborate with the applicant to implement the services as described in either the written

agreement or the MOU, including the commitment of the partners to sustain the project after the grant has expired.

▪ **Attachment 13G (maximum one page)**

Project: Identify and describe how program systems, policies, services, and activities are developed and delivered in equitable ways for all students served. This includes ensuring that there is adequate funding for staff training in issues such as equity; ability to collect robust data at disaggregate levels; establishment of high standards; differentiation of learning (especially for English Learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty); allocation of resources in responsive ways; ensuring that all programming takes place in safe and accessible facilities that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act; ensuring that students are able to travel safely between the center and home; and collaboration with key stakeholders to better leverage and coordinate supports.

▪ **Attachment 13H (maximum one page)**

Project: Describe the established plan for implementing extended learning time, if applicable. If not applicable, respond “N/A.”

▪ **Attachment 13I (maximum one page)**

Management and Resources: Describe how the transportation needs of participating students will be addressed.

▪ **Attachment 13J (maximum one page)**

Management and Resources: Demonstrate how the proposed program will coordinate with federal, state, and local programs.

▪ **Attachment 13K (maximum two pages)**

Project: Describe how proposed activities will meet the measures of effectiveness (Targets, Objectives, Goals).

▪ **Attachment 13L (maximum three pages)**

Capacity: Describe in detail how the proposed activities are expected to improve student academic achievement and overall student success, including how they will:

1. Support postsecondary and career readiness skills;
2. Be aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards;
3. Use best practices, including research- or evidence-based practices, to provide educational and related activities that will complement and enhance academic performance, achievement, postsecondary and workforce preparation, and positive youth development of the students.
4. Incorporate innovative and evidence-based practices to support the enhancement of students' academic, social, and career skills.

Sufficient detail must be provided to relay that the program will supplement programs already being provided to improve student achievement and not supplant federal, state, or local funding.

▪ **Attachment 13M (maximum two pages)**

Project: Provide the information requested in the 21st CCLC Program Design and Program Evaluation sections of this NOFO. Applicant's response should:

1. Indicate who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation (i.e., name of individual and/or company) along with rationale for selecting evaluator;
2. Have a compelling rationale for the selected evaluation approach;
3. Be technically sound with regard to the evaluation design and measurement of the program toward goals and objectives;
4. Be clearly tied to the state and local goals and objectives;
5. Describe the methods to be used to gather, organize, summarize, analyze, and present data;

6. Identify the quantitative and qualitative data to be collected. Describe and/or include the data collection tools, if applicable. Data collection efforts must be aligned to Illinois' 21st CCLC goals, objectives, performance measures, targets, and performance standards as outlined in the Program Objectives and Performance Measures, Targets, and Performance Standards, of this NOFO and aligned to local goals and objectives as submitted in Attachment 8 of the NOFO forms;
7. Indicate how the applicant will facilitate the collection of both formative and summative evaluation data;
8. Provide the organizational structures that will be employed to oversee the evaluation process;
9. Indicate how the resulting recommendations will be incorporated into the program on an annual basis for continuous improvement; and
10. Describe the process to disseminate the evaluation results to the target audiences.

▪ **Attachment 13N (maximum one page)**

Management & Resources: Describe how federal, state, and local funding will be used in coordination with 21st CCLC grant funds to maximize the effective use of public resources. Indicate any after-school programs already in operation and identify specifically all other funding sources that will be used to supplement the program.

▪ **Attachment 13O (maximum five pages)**

Management & Resources: Include detailed job descriptions with duties and required qualifications for each position to be funded by the 21st CCLC grant as outlined in the Program Narrative Requirements section of this NOFO.

▪ **Attachment 13P (maximum one page)**

Management & Resources: Describe how appropriately qualified persons will be encouraged and used to serve as volunteers if you plan to use volunteers in activities carried out through the community learning center.

▪ **Attachment 13Q (maximum one page)**

Management & Resources: Identify and describe the ongoing professional development that will be provided to staff and explain how it will contribute to student achievement. Describe the professional development activities, including targeted staff, frequency, format, etc. Indicate how staff will be trained on the Illinois Quality Statewide Afterschool Standards. Describe how the ED's [21st CCLC National Technical Assistance Center](#) website will be used for professional development, as applicable.

▪ **Attachment 13R (maximum three pages)**

Management & Resources: Describe how the community learning center will continue after the 21st CCLC funding ends.

Applicant-Generated Attachments (Attachments 14A and 14B)

For Attachments 14A and 14B:

- Use the provided form as a cover for your applicant-generated attachments. Do not write or insert any other content directly on the provided form.

▪ **Attachment 14A (no page limit)**

Memorandum/Memoranda of Understanding: Include all relevant Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). An MOU must describe the roles and responsibilities of the partners in the 21st CCLC program, including any in-kind services, such as, but not limited to, access to grades, access to the facilities, janitorial services, transportation, etc. Detailed instructions can be found on the Attachment 14A cover.

▪ **Attachment 14B (no page limit)**

Provide a sample program schedule of operation for one week of programming for each location. If summer programming is taking place, provide a sample schedule for one week of summer programming, as well. For each activity proposed in the sample schedule, provide the name of the proposed activity; rationale for the proposed activity; a description of the proposed activity, including covered content; the frequency of the proposed activity (e.g., daily, weekly); the number of sessions the proposed activity will meet; the length of each session of the proposed activity (e.g., 1 hour); and the target population for the proposed activity (e.g., grade levels, parents, etc.).

Review Criteria

Application Review and Selection Process

The selection of the grantees will be based upon the overall quality of the application. The scoring is based upon the following criteria:

- Application Completion is defined as the completion of every document that does not result in automatic ineligibility. If an individual item is listed on the Evaluation Rubric for completion and the item is fully completed (including all required information, signatures, etc.) that item will earn 5 points; if the item is not fully completed, it will earn 0 points.
- Need is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose.
- Capacity is defined as the ability of an entity to execute the grant project according to the project requirements.
- Quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a service, project, or product that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program.
- Evaluation is defined as the ability to judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of a service, project, or product.
- Sustainability is defined the ability to maintain programming and its benefits over time.

Proposals must receive 111 points from Sections 1-6 of the Evaluation Rubric to be eligible for priority points. Proposals that score under 148 total points will not be funded.

Tiebreaker

In the event of a tie, the applicant that proposes to serve a district/districts furthest away from adequacy will be given priority.

Merit-Based Review

ISBE's evaluation process is described in section II.C. of ISBE's [Merit-Based Review Policy](#).

Evaluation Criteria

These overall criteria and sub-criteria are built into the rubric below. **The attachment number in the parentheses following the criteria lists where evaluators will look to determine if the criteria has been met.** The points for each section as well as the individual criterion also are included in the rubric.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer scores and comments by contacting the Wellness and Student Care Department at 21cclcrfp@isbe.net.

All eligible proposals will be read, reviewed, and scored by readers who have been selected for their expertise and experience with extended learning programs and grants management. A proposal must receive a minimum of 148 points to be considered for funding. The maximum proposal score is 185 points. Proposals submitted as joint applications must score a minimum of 111 points from Sections 1-6 of the Evaluation Rubric to be eligible for priority points. Eligible proposals may have a total of up to 50 competitive priority points assigned, meaning that after the assignment of competitive priority points proposals may receive a maximum score of 235 points. Please refer to the Merit-Based Review Policy for more information.

ISBE intends to award grants equitably to the extent practicable among geographic areas within the state, including urban and rural communities. ISBE has divided the state into seven regions based on the Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents regional service model; it aims to award not more than 50 percent of eligible funds to any one region. Among substantially similar proposals, priority will be given to applicants that propose to serve students from schools that either are listed as priority schools or are in areas of the state that are currently underrepresented by 21st CCLC awards.

Selection Criteria and point values are as follows:

Not Provided	Very Limited	Somewhat Limited	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
0	1	2	3	4	5
Proposal requirements are absent.	Proposal is unclear and lacks enough evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides very few details to meet the project outcomes.	Proposal provides moderate detail and conveys potential to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides good detail and strong evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal exceeds expectations and provides a solid plan to meet project outcomes.

Section 1: Application Completion 85 Points	Possible Points
Is the Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance fully completed? (Attachment 1)	0 or 5
Is the Joint Application Agreement completed? (N/A is also considered as completed.) (Attachment 2)	0 or 5
Is the NCES locale code AND Low-Income Rate provided for each school proposed to be served? (Attachment 3)	0 or 5
Is the Program Sites and Schools fully completed? (Attachment 4)	0 or 5
Is the Project Service Chart fully completed? (Attachment 5)	0 or 5
Are there 12 or more hours per week for the school year? (Attachment 5)	0 or 5
Are there 28 or more weeks per school year? (Attachment 5)	0 or 5
If summer programming is offered, are there 12 or more hours per week? (N/A is also considered as completed.) (Attachment 5)	0 or 5
If summer programming is offered, are there three or more weeks? (“N/A” is also considered as completed.) (Attachment 5)	0 or 5
Is the Equitable Participation of Private Schools completed and signed? (Attachment 6A)	0 or 5
Is the Equitable Participation of Public Schools completed and signed? (Attachment 6B)	0 or 5
Is the State-Required Graduation Courses completed and signed? (N/A is also considered as completed.) (Attachment 7)	0 or 5
Are all the Goals and Objectives completed? (Attachment 8)	0 or 5
Is the Budget Summary Breakdown completed? (Attachment 10)	0 or 5
Is everything listed on the Budget Summary Breakdown allowable for 21st CCLC? (Attachment 10)	0 or 5
Is the Program Income completed and signed? (Attachment 11)	0 or 5
Is the Extended Learning Time plan completed? (N/A is also considered as completed.) (Attachment 13H)	0 or 5
Section 2: Need 15 Points	Possible Points

The applicant adequately describes how the community will be notified at least 45 days prior to submission of the proposal. It describes how information about the 21st CCLC program, including its availability and location, will be disseminated to the community in a manner that is understandable and accessible. The applicant describes the method for outreach and a plan for securing the students' regular participation. It indicates how the entity will maintain before- and after-school programming that will meet the needs of working families and students. (Attachment 13A)	5
The applicant adequately addresses the results of the needs and resources assessment. Included is a gap analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the youth developmental needs and available community services. The gap analysis is used to draw conclusions and discuss how the proposed program will address the needs of the community; the students, including homeless children; neglected, delinquent, and migrant youth; and families, including the needs of working families. (Attachment 13D)	5
The applicant adequately describes the partnership between the LEA, CBO, and any other public or private entity, and the relevance and commitment of each collaborative partner in the proposed program to the implementation and success of the project. The applicant describes how the historical performance of each partner demonstrates its capacity to collaborate with the applicant to implement the services as described in either a written agreement or an MOU, including the commitment of the partners to sustain the project after the grant has expired. (Attachment 13F)	5
Section 3: Capacity 35 Points	Possible Points
The applicant provides an adequate sample program schedule of operation for one week of programming for each location. If summer programming is taking place, they provide a sample schedule for one week of summer programming, as well. For each activity proposed in the sample schedule, they provide the name of the proposed activity; rationale for the proposed activity; a description of the proposed activity, including covered content; the frequency of the proposed activity (e.g., daily, weekly); the number of sessions the proposed activity will meet; the length of each session of the proposed activity (e.g., 1 hour); and the target population for the proposed activity (e.g., grade levels, parents, etc.). The provided sample program of operations adequately aligns to the 21st CCLC grant objectives and the goals identified by the applicant. (Attachments 7 (if applicable), 8, 13H (if applicable), 14B)	5
The applicant adequately describes the overall objectives and activities of the 21st CCLC program, including students' and families' needs, the activities proposed, how the activities are expected to improve student academic achievement and overall student success, the intended outcomes, and key people who will be involved in the project. (Attachment 12)	5
The applicant adequately describes how the program will identify, recruit, and retain those students who are underperforming academically and most in need of academic assistance, including what criteria will be used to recommend students for services, and what process will be used to select students for participation. (Attachment 13E)	5
The applicant adequately identifies and describes how program systems, policies, services, and activities are developed and delivered in equitable ways for all students served. This includes ensuring that there is adequate funding for staff training in issues such as equity; there is capability to collect robust data at disaggregate levels, establish	5

high standards, and differentiate learning; there is allocation of resources in responsive ways; all programming takes place in safe and accessible facilities; facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; students are able to travel safely between the center and home; and there is collaboration with key stakeholders to better leverage and coordinate supports. (Attachment 13G)	
The applicant adequately describes how the transportation needs of participating students will be addressed. (Attachment 13I)	5
The applicant describes in detail how the proposed activities are expected to improve student academic achievement and overall student success, including how they will: 1. Support college and career readiness skills; 2. Be aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards; 3. Will use best practices, including research- or evidence-based practices, to provide educational and related activities that will complement and enhance academic performance, achievement, postsecondary and workforce preparation, and positive youth development of the students; 4. Explain how the proposed program will incorporate innovative and evidence-based practices to support the enhancement of students; academic, social, and career skills. Sufficient detail is provided to relay that the program will supplement programs already being provided to improve student achievement and not supplant federal, state, or local funding. (Attachments 7 (if applicable), 13H (if applicable), 13L)	5
The applicant adequately describes how federal, state, and local funding will be used in coordination with 21st CCLC grant funds to maximize the effective use of public resources. They indicate any after-school programs already in operation and identify specifically all other funding sources that will be used to supplement the program. Grant funds will not be used to supplant programs that already exist or previously existed. (Attachment 13N)	5
Section 4: Quality 20 Points	Possible Points
The applicant provides brief background information about the applying entity. Including: 1. Providing a summary of the types of services they provide and to whom. 2. Providing evidence of the applying entity's cultural and linguistic competence to provide services as described in this proposal. 3. Providing a description of existing linkages, or a plan to establish linkages, with community resources and services, particularly the organizations addressing substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and other human services that will not be provided by the applying entity. (Attachment 13B)	5
The applicant provides an adequate statement describing past after-school programming, whether through 21st CCLC programs or not. Included are the length, frequency, average number of students served, and any differences between proposed services and actual services delivered. They describe the successes and challenges of the previous after-school programs. (Attachment 13C)	5
The applicant adequately includes detailed job descriptions with duties and required qualifications for each position to be funded by the 21st CCLC grant. They describe how appropriately qualified persons will be encouraged and used to serve as volunteers if they plan to use volunteers in activities carried out through the community learning center.	5

The applicant adequately describes how these positions will support the objectives of the grant. (Attachments 13O, 13P)	
The applicant adequately identifies and describes the ongoing staff professional development, including activities, frequency, format, etc., and explains how the opportunities will contribute to student achievement. They describe how the staff will be trained on the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards and describe how they plan to use ED's NTAC website and/or other applicable offerings for professional development purposes. (Attachment 13Q)	5
Section 5: Evaluation 15 Points	Possible Points
Program goals and objectives are adequately SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) and relate to the targets, measures, and objectives of 21 st CCLC programming. (Attachment 8)	5
The applicant adequately describes how proposed activities will meet the measures of effectiveness (Targets, Objectives, Goals). (Attachment 13K)	5
The applicant substantially describes the evaluation process. Including: 1. Indicating who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation along with rationale for selecting evaluator. 2. Having a compelling rationale for the selected evaluation approach. 3. Being technically sound with regard to the evaluation design and measurement of the program toward goals and objectives. 4. Being clearly tied to the state and local goals and objectives. 5. Describes the methods to be used to gather, organize, summarize, analyze, and present data, including dissemination of feedback and data to the staff and community for the purpose of continuous program improvement. 6. Identifies the quantitative and qualitative data to be collected. Describes and/or includes the data collection tools, if applicable. 7. Facilitates the collection of both formative and summative evaluation data. 8. Provides the organizational structures that will be employed to oversee the evaluation process. 9. Indicates how the resulting recommendations will be incorporated into the program on an annual basis for continuous improvement. 10. Describes the process to disseminate the evaluation results to the target audiences. (Attachment 13M)	5
Section 6: Sustainability 15 Points	Possible Points
The applicant adequately demonstrates how the proposed program will coordinate with federal, state, and local programs. (Attachment 13J)	5
The applicant adequately describes how the community learning center will continue after the 21 st CCLC funding ends. (Attachment 13R)	5

The applicant includes the written agreements from each co-applicant and partner listed on Attachments 2 and 3 of the proposal. The agreements must adequately describe the roles and responsibilities of the co-applicants and partners in the 21st CCLC program, including any in-kind services, such as, but not limited to, access to grades, access to the facilities, janitorial services, transportation, etc. The letters must indicate the names of the co-applicants and partners and be signed by the co-applicants' and partners' chief executive officers or persons authorized to commit the co-applicants' and partners' staff and/or resources to the center. (Attachment 14A)	5
Section 7: Priority Points Only applications that receive a base score of 111 from or higher Sections 1 -6 of the Evaluation Rubric will be eligible for Priority Points. 50 Points	Possible Points
Comprehensive, Intensive, or Targeted Eligible Schools and Joint Applications: These are programs that serve the state's Comprehensive, Intensive, or Targeted Schools (as designated by the 2024-25 Illinois Report Card) and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A and at least one public or private community organization. (Attachments 2, 14A)	0 or 10
Tier 1 or Tier 2 School Districts Not Served and Joint Applications: These are programs that serve schools from Tier 1 or Tier 2 districts (status as determined by EBF in FY 2026 that can be found on ISBE's Evidenced Based Funding Distribution Calculation webpage). They are not funded for 21st CCLC services in Cohorts 25 and 26 and are submitted as a joint application with at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A and at least one public or private community organization. (Attachments 3, 14A)	0 or 10
Middle and High Schools and Joint Applications: These are programs that serve eligible middle schools or high schools and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A and at least one public or private community organization ("eligible schools" as indicated in the Population to be Served section on page 3 of this NOFO). For the purposes of this NOFO, middle schools are defined as eligible schools that contain Grades 5 through 8, 6 through 8, or 7 and 8. High schools are defined as eligible schools that serve any combination of Grades 9 through 12 that grant a diploma upon completion. These are typical grade bands and special considerations can be made for extenuating circumstances. (Attachments 3, 4, 14A)	0 or 10
Rural Schools and Joint Applications: These programs propose to serve students who attend rural schools and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A and at least one public or private community organization. (Attachment 3, 14A)	0 or 10
Novice Grantees and Joint Applications: These are grantees and programs that have not had a 21st CCLC grant since FY 2014 and are submitted as a joint application between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A and at least one public or private community organization. Grantees that have had 21st CCLC grants from FY 2015 to the present do not qualify as novice grantees, (Attachment 14A)	0 or 10

NOFO Appendix A

This is not a requirement to apply for the grant.

Letter of Intent to Apply

Date:

Name of Applicant:

Address of Applicant:

Name of Contact Person:

Phone of Contact Person:

Email of Contact Person:

Please accept this correspondence as [applicant(s) name(s)] official letter of intent to apply for FY 2027 Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant funds. Requested information is provided below.

- Official name(s) of the school(s) to be served by this grant:
- Site name(s) if different than school(s):
- Name and contact information for any co-applicants:
- Grant years if previously funded:

Return via email to 21ccclcrfp@isbe.net.

**FY 2027 21st CCLC NOFO
Proposal Submission Requirement Checklist**

Reference the following two checklists to assure that all required materials are submitted complete with necessary signatures and other requirements. For detailed requirements for each attachment, refer to the Content and Form of Application Submission section of the NOFO beginning on [page 32](#). These checklists are for applicant reference. It is advised but not required that applicants submit these checklists with application materials.

ISBE-Provided Attachments

Attachment #	Title Relevant Notes/Requirements	Check when completed and attached.
1	Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance Applicant must sign.	☐
2	Joint Application Agreement - Applicant must sign. - Co-applicant must sign.	☐
3	Program Summary Duplicate as needed to provide additional partner information.	☐
4	Program Sites and Schools Duplicate as needed to provide additional site information.	☐
5	Project Service Chart Duplicate as needed to provide information for additional sites.	☐
6A	Equitable Participation of Private Schools - Public school applicants must consult all area private schools. - School official must complete and sign. - Applicant must sign. - Duplicate as needed for additional private schools. If not applicable, applicant must indicate as such and sign.	☐
6B	Equitable Participation of Public Schools - Private school applicants must consult all area public schools. - School official must complete and sign. - Applicant must sign. - Duplicate as needed for additional public schools. If not applicable, applicant must indicate as such and sign.	☐
7	State-Required Graduation Courses - If applicable, superintendent must sign. - If applicable, fiscal agent must sign. - If not applicable, fiscal agent must indicate as such and sign.	☐
8	Program Goals and Objectives - Complete all four pages, addressing each objective - Duplicate individual pages as needed for additional objectives.	☐
9	Federal Budget Summary - MUST be submitted on the provided form. - Forms from district-based applicants must be signed by the district superintendent. - Forms from other applicants (not districts) must be signed by an authorized representative.	☐
10	Budget Summary Breakdown Duplicate as needed.	☐

11	Program Income If this attachment is not applicable, an authorized official should indicate as such and sign.	☐
12	Proposal Abstract Do not duplicate; responses limited to page provided.	☐
13A-13R	Program Narrative Responses - Respond to every question. - Do not exceed page limits.	☐

Applicant-Generated Attachments

Attachment # (Use provided forms as cover pages.)	Title Relevant Notes/Requirements	Check when completed and attached.
14A	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Include an MOU between the LEA and the principal of each participating school to be served by the 21st CCLC program and the non-LEA co-applicant (as applicable). - For an LEA applicant unable to partner with another eligible entity in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality, include a letter that demonstrates efforts to identify and obtain a co-applicant and an explanation of why they were unable to partner	☐
14B	Sample Program Schedule - Provide a sample program schedule of operation for one week of programming for each location. If summer programming is taking place, provide a sample schedule for one week of summer programming, as well. - For each activity proposed in the sample schedule, provide: - Name of proposed activity - Rationale - Description, including covered content - Frequency (e.g., daily, weekly) - Number of sessions - Length of each session (e.g., one hour) - Target population (e.g., grade levels, parents, etc.)	☐