

21st Century Community Learning Centers Cohort 18 Competitive Grant Program

**Susan Brigman, Section Chief ~ 21st CCLC Programs
Office of Federal Programs**

SBE Policy CNTR 001

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) policy CNTR-001 outlines the approval process for competitive non-discretionary funds.

This policy was developed to assure the Board that all project proposals have been evaluated fairly and on merit without bias or favoritism and all approval criteria for selection have been followed.

Definition: Competitive projects are those projects for which NCDPI or SBE solicits proposals from eligible applicants and are evaluated against a set of approved criteria to determine the recommendations for funding.

SECTION V. Exceptions

- Any additional criteria, **amended process**, or further changes made to the above procedures must be approved by the deputy state superintendent.
- In accordance with the policy, the State Board of Education (SBE) can approve deviation from the written policy.
- The SBE approval of this RFP authorizes the following approval process for awarding 21st CCLC Cohort 18 grants.

21st CCLC Competitive Grant Competition Review Process

- **Initial Login and Screening:** Each application is reviewed to determine the presence of basic components including proposal sections, applicant and partner signatures, and other essential items outlined in the Application Guidance including determination of Good Standing.
- **Level I Review:** The review team is comprised of experienced, external grant readers from various professions. Impartial reviewers will evaluate each application based on the proposed activities and the capability of the applicant to implement the proposed program.
- A review team of three reviewers will assess each application utilizing a Rating Rubric (Appendix E). Scores from the independent evaluations will be averaged to determine a final rating for each application. Each proposal will be included in one of the five following quality bands:
 - Excellent (123-145)
 - Strong (100-122)
 - Average (76-99)
 - Weak (55-75)
 - Unacceptable (54 or below)

21st CCLC Competitive Grant Competition Review Process

- **Level II Review:** Applications recommended for funding by the review team will be reviewed by a smaller team of reviewers (which may include the Office of Federal Programs director and review team chairpersons). These reviewers will use the following criteria and will assign priority points to applications that meet with specific funding priorities.
- In addition to a quality review score, all applications will receive a technical review to ensure all required and related documents are complete, including all official signatures on all required documents.
- Any required document(s) not completed or submitted in its entirety and/or is missing official signatures will be considered incomplete in its submission and will receive a point deduction(s) for each incomplete required document submitted. Any Technical Review point deductions will be applied to the final score of the application, reducing the final score.

21st CCLC Competitive Grant Competition Review Process

- **Level III Review:** Using results from the level I and level II evaluations, the Office of Federal Programs director and other leadership appointed by the appropriate chief officer, jointly determine with the appropriate SBE Committee the final recommendations to the SBE for approval based on the total amount of funds requested compared to the total amount of funds available.
- Upon approval from the SBE, the General Contact Person and Fiscal Agent (if different organization from the General Contact) will be notified via email.

Purpose of the 21st CCLC Grant:

Authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. The purpose of the grant is to provide federal funds to establish or expand community learning centers that operate during out-of-school time (OST) hours with three specific purposes:

1. Provide opportunities during non-school hours for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students (particularly students in high poverty areas and those who attend low-performing schools) meet state and local student performance standards in core academic subjects such as reading and math.
2. Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.
3. Offer families of students served by 21st CCLCs opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Eligible Entities

- Local educational agencies;
- Community-based organizations;
- City or County government agencies;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Bureau of Indian Education schools
- Institutions of higher education; and
- For-profit corporations

Fiscal Agent Restriction

- An organization or individual serving as a Fiscal Agent is limited to submitting one application per 21st CCLC grant competition.
- The designated Fiscal Agent has the exclusive signatory authority for the 21st CCLC grant they are serving.
- The Fiscal Agent (or authorized signing signatory) is responsible for signing all documents required by NCDPI as well as other legally binding documents in all grant-related matters.
- The applying Fiscal Agent must retain full responsibility for the 21st CCLC program's financial management, reporting obligations, and program implementation in all such arrangements.

Good Standing

- Any previous or current 21st CCLC subgrantees terminated by NCDPI are considered not in Good Standing and are not eligible to reapply for two (2) consecutive 21st CCLC standard three (3) year cohort grant cycles for a minimum of 6 years from the effective date of termination.
- Good Standing is applied at both the subgrantee and fiscal agent levels. If the applicant organization is deemed Not in Good Standing by the NCDPI Office of Federal Programs, its associated fiscal agent is also deemed not in good standing.
- If the applicant organization and its associated fiscal agent are deemed Not in Good Standing by the NCDPI Office of Federal Programs at any point during this grant's review process, the application may be identified as "Not Recommended" for funding to the State Board of Education (SBE).

Absolute Priority

Under Section 4203 of the ESEA, the State must give priority to applications proposing to primarily serve students who attend schools eligible for Title I, Part A schoolwide programs. Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) provides financial assistance to LEAs and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

Competitive Priority Points (Up to 14 points)

Special Populations (up to 4 points)

- Applications will receive priority consideration if they propose to provide services to students who primarily attend schools that enroll students who may be at risk for academic failure, dropping out of school, involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or who lack strong positive role models.
- For the purposes of this grant, NCDPI will give priority consideration to applications requesting the Special Populations priority point(s) if a majority (at least 51%) of the proposed feeder schools meet the following condition(s):

CSI/TSI Feeder School Designation (up to 2 points)

- Propose that all (100%) schools to be served are identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Schools (2 points); or
- Propose that all (100%) schools to be served are a combination of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools (1 point) [CSI/TSI 2023-2024 list](#)

Chronic Absenteeism – 2023 NC School Report Card Data for Proposed Feeder Schools (1 point)

- To qualify for the Chronic Absenteeism priority point, a majority (at least 51%) of an applicant's proposed feeder schools must demonstrate greater rates of chronic absenteeism when compared to the State of North Carolina in 2022-2023 school year.

Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension or In-School Suspension – 2023 NC School Report Card Data for Proposed Feeder Schools (1 point)

- To qualify for the Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension or In-School Suspension priority point, a majority (at least 51%) of an applicant's proposed feeder schools must demonstrate greater rates of short-term out-of-school suspension rates or in-school suspension rates when compared to the State of North Carolina in 2022-2023 school year.

Joint Applicants (1 point)

- States must give competitive priority to applications submitted jointly by eligible entities consisting of not less than one LEA/PSU receiving funds under Title I, Part A of the ESEA and another eligible entity.
- If an LEA/PSU applicant (e.g., a rural LEA) demonstrates that it is unable to partner with another eligible entity, such as a CBO, in reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality to meet the requirements of the 21st CCLC program, the State must give priority to the LEA/PSU applicant in the same manner as an LEA/PSU that applies jointly with another entity (Section 4204(i)(2)). Additional information regarding reasonable geographic proximity can be found in Appendix B.

Expanded Access (up to 5 points)

- Applications will receive a priority consideration if they demonstrate that the proposed activities are, as of the date of the submission of the application, not accessible to students who would be served; or would expand accessibility to high-quality services available in the community.
- For the purposes of this grant, NCDPI will give priority consideration to applications requesting the Expanded Access priority point(s) if **a majority (at least 51%) of the proposed feeder schools meet the following condition(s):**

Unserved Counties (2 points)

- Priority consideration shall be given to applications proposing to run 2025-2028 NCDPI Cohort 18 21st CCLC Program site(s) in a county that has not hosted a 21st CCLC program site in the last three (3) grant cycles (i.e., Cohort 15, Cohort 16, Cohort 17).

Serving Rural Counties (up to 3 points)

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2023 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes distinguish U.S. metropolitan (metro) counties by the population size of their metro area, and nonmetropolitan (nonmetro) counties by their degree of urbanization and adjacency to a metro area.
 - Counties rated 4 and 5: 1 priority point
 - Counties rated 6 and 7: 2 priority points
 - Counties rated 8 and 9: 3 priority points
- Applicants must use the USDA 2023 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes to determine county ratings.

State Level Priorities:

USED allows states to include additional priorities in its local 21st CCLC subgrant competition. For the 2025-2028 NCDPI Cohort 18 21st CCLC Competitive Grant Program, NCDPI will award competitive priority points to applications proposing to meet the following criteria:

County Distress Ranking (Tiers) (up to 2 points)

Priority consideration shall be given to applicants proposing to serve a majority (at least 51%) of proposed feeder schools located in a distressed county based on the NC Department of Commerce 2025 County Distress Rankings (Tiers).

- Tier 3: 0 priority points
- Tier 2: 1 priority point
- Tier 1: 2 priority points

Demonstrated Use of Braided Funds to Support Program Implementation (1 point)

Applicants will receive priority consideration if they sufficiently demonstrate how federal, state, and local funds will be combined or coordinated (i.e., braided) for the most effective use of public resources. If an applicant plans to braid other local, state, or federal funding to support the 21st CCLC program throughout the duration of grant period, to receive this priority point, applicants must:

- Complete the “Braided Funds” section of the Total Cost Worksheet to demonstrate that braided funds from multiple sources will constitute at least 10% of the total budget;
- Complete and upload a Partners Table to CCIP; and
- Sign and upload the “Braided Funds with Partners Table Form” document to CCIP.

Implement Trauma-Informed Practices (1 point)

- Applicants will be given priority consideration if they propose to implement trauma-informed practices that meet an identified need of their intended participants. A trauma-informed approach incorporates recognition of the widespread impact of trauma and its signs and symptoms, appropriate responses, and active efforts to avoid re-traumatization. Resources from the Department’s National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments can be adapted for use in 21st CCLC programs.
- To receive this priority point, applicants must complete the “Trauma-Informed Practices Assurances Form” document to attest to their capacity to hire and retain certified and qualified mental health professionals and/or partner with qualified mental health service providers employing certified mental health professionals to implement evidence-based trauma-informed practices throughout the duration of the 2025-2028 NCDPI Cohort 18 21st CCLC Competitive Grant Program.

Program Design

For the 2025-2028 NCDPI Cohort 18 21st CCLC Competitive Grant Program, NCDPI will allow applicants to apply to implement **one of three** (3) distinct program design formats to best meet their community's needs. These program design formats include:

- **Academic Year Program Only** (programming begins by October 15, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year), or
- **Academic Year Program and Summer Program** (programming begins by October 15, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year) or
- **Summer Program Only** (programming begins after the 2024-2025 school year).

Budget Design

- Applicants must allocate at least 80% of the 21st CCLC grant award to providing direct student services to students.
- Indirect student services cannot exceed 20% of the total grant award.
- An organization may only charge to the 21st CCLC grant up to 40 hours per week for a Program Director salary. This limitation applies even when the potential grant awards span different 21st CCLC cohorts.

Funding Awards

For the 2025-2028 NCDPI Cohort 18 21st CCLC Competitive Grant Program, NCDPI may award up to **\$8.5 million** in accordance with the following statements:

- **At least one (1) 21st CCLC grants proposing to operate an academic year program (with or without a summer program) per each State Board of Education (SBE) region of the state** pending submission of quality applications by at least one (1) eligible organizations in the SBE Region and following Level I and Level II reviews.
- **At least one (1) 21st CCLC grant proposing to operate summer only programs per each State Board of Education (SBE) region of the state** pending submission of quality applications by at least one (1) eligible organization in the SBE Region and following Level I and Level II reviews.
- After the initial awardees are identified, NCDPI may continue to recommend one (1) additional organization per region proposing to operate academic year program (with or without a summer program) for the award based on total application score and ranking. If funding is available, NCDPI will then recommend one (1) additional organization per region proposing to operate summer only programs for the award based on total application score and ranking until funds are depleted.

Funding Levels

NCDPI utilized resources from the Wallace Foundation and Afterschool Alliance in an effort to align with nationwide average costs for regular attendees in out-of-school-time programs. Optional summer program funding ranges for were determined using funding ranges from recent SBE-approved NCDPI 21st CCLC summer program competitions.

- Applicants will determine their required academic year out-of-school-time program funding request and, if applicable, their optional summer program funding request separately.
- The total amount requested **cannot exceed \$500,000** for the Academic Program Year with the option of Summer and **cannot exceed \$400,000** for the Summer Only option.

Funding Ranges (RFP pgs.27-29)

- Organizations must serve a minimum of **50 students for 300 hours** during the Academic School Year and must serve a minimum of 25 students in either Summer Programming Option.
- As the number of students increases so do the ranges of funding.
- For example during the **academic school year**(depending on grade levels served):

50 students(minimum)= \$50,000 (minimum) - \$225,000

51-75 students = Up to \$296,250

76-100 students = Up to \$337,500

100 + students= Up to \$378, 750

Summer Funding Examples

Standard Summer Funding Ranges (Minimum of 4 consecutive weeks)

25-49 students: \$25,000 - \$84,000

50-75 students: up to \$125,000

76-100 students: up to \$200,000

101+ students: up to \$250,000

Summer Intensive Funding Ranges (Minimum 2-3 consecutive weeks)

25-49 students: \$25,000 - \$50,000

50-75 students: up to \$75,000

76-100 students: up to \$120,000

101+ students: up to \$150,000

Important Funding Notes (RFP pgs. 27-29)

NOTE:

The maximum allowable award amount for Academic Year Programs is \$378,750.

NOTE:

The maximum allowable award amount for Standard Summer Programs is \$250,000.

NOTE:

The maximum allowable award amount for Summer Intensive Programs is \$150,000.

Academic Year Funding Installments

Required academic year program funds will be allotted as follows:

1. Initial installment equal to 34% of total required academic program year award will be issued after NCDPI approval of required documentation and final budget;
2. Second installment equal to 34% of the total required academic program year award if subgrantee has met at least 50% of its enrollment goal as stated in the SBE-approved application. Additionally, students must attend the program for **at least 45 hours** to be counted towards the second installment attendance goal.
3. Final installment equal to 32% of the total required academic program year award if subgrantee has met at least 75% of its enrollment goal as stated in the SBE-approved application. Additionally, students must attend the program for **at least 90 hours** to be counted towards the third installment attendance goal.

Summer Funding Installment

Upon approval of the awarded applicant's budget for each year of the grant award, summer program funds will be allotted as follows:

- One installment equal to 100% of total summer program award will be issued after NCDPI approval of required summer documentation and final summer budget.

Summer program award installments will not be issued prior to April 1st each year.

Funding Reductions

- Each year, if awarded subgrantees do not meet requirements for the second and/or third installment of the required academic program year award, the awarded subgrantee will be required to forfeit second and/or third installment or right size their program for the remainder of the grant year. In addition, the program will be required to right size their program for the remainder of the three (3) year grant cycle.
- If awarded subgrantees do not meet proposed enrollment goals for the optional summer program, the awarded subgrantee will be required to reduce summer program funds for the remainder of the three (3) year grant cycle.

Any funds recovered from reductions or forfeitures will be redistributed to those subgrantees that have successfully met the third (3) installment requirements.

Awarded Cohort 18 Grant Recipient Onboarding Requirements

Date	Required Event	Required Attendees
Thursday, May 15, 2025	Summer Only Initial Onboarding (Virtual)	Program Director and Chief Fiscal Agent
Tuesday, July 29, 2025	Cohort 18 On-Boarding (In Person)	Program Director and Chief Fiscal Agent
Wednesday, July 30 – Thursday, July 31, 2025	21 st CCLC Program Foundations Conference	

Awarded organizations who do not attend the in-person onboarding training may be required to forfeit their entire 3-year Cohort 18 21st CCLC grant award.

Competition Timeline

January 9	Per State Board of Education policy- Approval of the Cohort 18 RFP
January 13	CCIP Application Opens at 8:00 am
January 15 th and 16 th , 2025	<u>Technical Assistance (TA) Webinars</u>
Can be accessed online at any time	<u>CCIP Virtual New Users Training Password for Training</u> kSZGyiv4 <u>CCIP New Users Training Link</u>
February 18, 2025	Applications Due – Application submitted through CCIP and time stamped by 12:00 p.m. NOON Eastern Standard Time. Applications must at least be at 'Draft Completed' to be considered for review and/or evaluation.
May 1, 2025	<u>SBE Meeting</u> – Anticipated meeting for new grant recommendations for SBE review and approval as Action on First Reading.
May 5, 2025	<u>Notifications to Approved/Not Approved Applicants</u> – Applicants notified of approval or non-approval.

Appeals Process

In accordance with federal rules, NCDPI provides applicants or recipients with the opportunity for a hearing to appeal NCDPI's final action under an applicable federal program. See 34 C.F.R. § 76.401(a), 34C.F.R. § 76.783 and 20 U.S.C. 1231b-2. Specifically, the applicant or recipient must allege that NCDPI violated State or Federal law, rules, regulations, or guidelines in:

- disapproving or failing to approve its application or program in whole or part,
- failing to provide funds in amounts in accord with the requirements of laws and regulations,
- ordering, in accordance with a final State audit resolution determination, the repayment of misspent or misapplied Federal funds, or
- terminating further assistance for an approved program.

- Appeals are limited to the grounds that the department failed to correctly apply the standards and process for reviewing the application as specified in the Request for Proposal and supporting documents. No other grounds for appeal will be accepted or considered.
- Appeals based on a disagreement with the professional judgment of the peer reviewers will not be considered. Peer reviewers are non-department employees recruited based on background and expertise in providing effective academic, enrichment, youth development, and related services to children (ESSA, Sec. 4201(b)(5)(B(i))).
- To request a hearing, the appellant must file a full and complete written appeal, including the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or other basis for the appeal position, and the remedy sought within 30 days of NCDPI's action (e.g., notification of any action on the previous slide).

Questions?



North Carolina Department of

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