

Considerations for Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Programs Offering Programming During the 2020-21 School Year

This document is meant to provide guidance to 21st CCLC programs related to two essential grant requirements: 1) 21st CCLC programs operate outside of regular school hours, and 2) transportation may not be a barrier to participation in 21st CCLC programs.

Definition of Out-of-School Time during the 2020-2021 School Year:

The federal law authorizing the 21st CCLC grant specifies that grant funds can only be used for activities that take place outside of the school day. During a typical year, when schools offer in-person instruction, it is relatively easy to distinguish between the school day and out-of-school time. However, when schools are operating virtually either all or part of the time, the definition of out-of-school time becomes more complicated. To that end, DPI has developed a definition of “out-of-school time” for 21st CCLC grantees who serve schools that are operating virtually at any time during 2020-2021. This definition is aligned to the guidance related to “hours of instruction” that DPI has recently provided to Wisconsin schools and districts via its Regulatory Flexibility Framework (<https://dpi.wi.gov/administrators/e-mail/regulatory-flexibility-framework>).

According to DPI’s Regulatory Flexibility Framework, when schools are operating virtually, “hours of instruction should be based on the time teachers are available to students and the school district’s estimate of the amount of time needed to accomplish learning objectives each day.” **Given this guidance, DPI is defining “out-of-school” time as any period of time that is outside of the school’s or district’s hours of instruction, as determined by the school or district.**

As such:

- 21st CCLC programs may offer extended hours while schools are operating virtually, including during hours that have traditionally been referred to as part of the school day (e.g., between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM).
- The hours of instruction and, thus, out-of-school time hours, will differ from district to district, and possibly from school to school within a district. 21st CCLC programs should consult with the districts and schools they serve, including any private schools they serve, to determine when teachers are available to help students and how much time the district or school estimates students will need to accomplish daily learning objectives. Based on that information, 21st CCLC programs should determine what hours of the day would be considered “out-of-school time” for their particular district or school.
- 21st CCLC funds can only be used to support programming that occurs during the time period that the program has determined to be “out-of-school time.”
- 21st CCLC funds can only be used to support expanded learning and enrichment activities for students. For example, this may include specific synchronous enrichment activities led by 21st CCLC staff or asynchronous enrichment activities provided by 21st CCLC staff

that students complete independently. 21st CCLC funds cannot be used to provide direct oversight of or support for school day instruction.

- While there is a minimum number of hours that 21st CCLC programs are required to operate per week, there is no maximum. 21st CCLC programs can expand their hours of operation if they have the funds to do so (either via carryover funds, COVID-19 relief funds, or other funding sources). However, a program's allocation will not be increased to cover the costs associated with expanded program hours.
- 21st CCLC grant funds may not be used to supplant existing services or activities that would otherwise be supported by another funding source in the absence of the 21st CCLC award. Funds may be used to supplement existing services or activities.

Transportation:

21st CCLC programs are required to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to participation in the program. This requirement is still in effect during the 2020-2021 school year, and it applies to programs that are offering in-person instruction to students when schools are operating remotely.

As such:

- 21st CCLC programs must offer additional transportation options to families unable to bring their students to the program or pick them up.
- 21st CCLC funds can be used to pay directly for transportation costs (e.g., contracting with bus service or leasing a van) or to purchase bus tickets for students who use public transportation to get to and from the program. 21st CCLC funds cannot be used to provide gas cards for families or to reimburse families for transportation costs.
- 21st CCLC programs must ensure that students travel safely **to** and **from** the program. This means that, while schools are operating remotely, 21st CCLC programs must have a transportation plan that addresses how students will travel to the program and home from the program.
- Given the logistical difficulties of transporting large numbers of students during the COVID-19 pandemic, programs may encourage parents and guardians to drop off and pick up their students, if at all possible. However, programs may not require parents and guardians to drop off and pick up.