



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

DATE: October 27, 2022

TO: Chief State School Officers

CC: State Title IV, Part B Directors

FROM: James F. Lane
Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2022 Supplemental Grant Awards for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century
Community Learning Centers Program under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act

On June 25, 2022, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), legislation that expands vital mental health services and provides additional support for States and districts to design and enhance initiatives that will promote safer, more inclusive, and positive school environments for all students, educators, and school staff.

The BSCA includes an appropriation of \$50 million for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. The U.S. Department of Education (Department) will allocate BSCA funds to your State through a supplemental grant award to your State's existing Federal fiscal year (FY) 2022 grant for the 21st CCLC program awarded on July 1, 2022, using the same formula used for your FY 2022 award. The same terms and conditions will apply to this supplemental award; no action is needed to receive the supplemental award.

As with your FY 2022 21st CCLC grant, you may reserve not more than two percent of these funds for administrative costs and not more than five percent for State activities. Your State must allocate the remaining BSCA 21st CCLC funds to eligible entities. Under the BSCA, the supplemental award is intended to support "evidence-based practices intended to increase attendance and engagement of students in the middle grades and high school." Based on data from the Department's Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) 2022 School Pulse Panel, 45 percent of all public schools reported that student chronic absenteeism "increased a lot" since before the pandemic, and 67 percent of all public schools reported that student chronic absenteeism remained the same or increased in the last school year (<https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/spp/>). Accordingly, the Department strongly urges your State to include a priority in your next 21st CCLC competition that emphasizes evidence-based practices for increasing student attendance and engagement, reducing rates of chronic absenteeism, and enhancing connections between students in middle grades and high school and their school, family, and program partners. Alternatively, your State may provide supplementary supports to existing subgrantees to provide or expand services to students in middle grades and high school.

The Department provides specific resources for increasing attendance and engagement on the [You for Youth \(Y4Y\)](#) website, through the [Center on PBIS | Resource: Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic](#)

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

[Absenteeism](#), via the [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#), and through the [Student Engagement and Attendance Center](#). In doing this important work, in addition to taking advantage of these Department resources, we encourage States and 21st CCLC subgrantees to focus on grade-level appropriate practices supported by high-quality research. In promoting increased student attendance and engagement, States and their 21st CCLC subgrantees can use funds to:

- **Create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment.** This includes implementing asset-based approaches that consider the unique context and assets of specific communities. Additional examples of supportive practices are available in the Department’s [Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs](#) resource. Such examples include community-driven programs designed to promote active partnerships with community organizations and mental health providers and empower and elevate youth voices.
- **Support family engagement and provide family supports.** Strong personal outreach with families builds a foundation for success. Such outreach should promote consistent positive communication between 21st CCLC programs and families, gather valuable input from families and respond to that input, provide flexible opportunities to meet with program teams at times and in formats (e.g., in-person, virtually, one-on-one, in group settings) that work for different families, offer access to community resources, provide training on home-based strategies, and encourage collaboration in identifying supportive approaches. For example, programs can consider [using text messages](#) to promote attendance and, where appropriate, offering home visits with program leaders or mentors.
- **Promote strong connections between schools and 21st CCLC programs to allow continuity of supports.** Embedding engagement efforts into structures and processes is a core component of long-term success and sustainability. For example, multi-tiered systems of support in schools could be adapted and implemented in 21st CCLC programs to integrate academic, mental health, and behavioral supports and interventions. Where appropriate and consistent with all student privacy regulations, sharing information about student attendance, progress and performance, such as information from an [early warning indicator system](#), can allow 21st CCLC programs to adapt and respond to emerging student needs and do so in a timely manner. Information sharing is critical to supporting student transitions, such as the transitions between elementary, middle, and high school.
- **Implement trauma-informed practices.** 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. Safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, and collaboration are key principles of the approach according to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#). Resources from the Department’s National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments available at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/building-trauma-sensitive-schools> can be adapted for use in 21st CCLC programs. Whenever possible, integrate school-based mental health supports into 21st CCLC programs. Additional resources to effectively incorporate supports in programs can be found on the Y4Y website here: [trauma-informed care](#).
- **Establish mentoring programs built on strong relationships** among students, mentors, schools, and families. Supportive mentorship relationships can promote resilience and increase mental health and academic development. The Y4Y website offers a [webinar focused on 21st CCLC mentoring programs](#), and the [National Partnership for Student Success](#) provides technical assistance on establishing high-quality mentoring programs. Additional information on the benefits of high-quality mentoring, along with key components of productive mentoring relationships, are available from [youth.gov](#), the [National Mentoring Resource Center](#), and the [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#).
- **Provide relevant and engaging learning experiences** such as student apprenticeships with businesses and other employers in the community, exploration opportunities, project-based learning, community field trips, service-learning opportunities, and tutoring. To provide students with the right supports,

focus on acceleration rather than remediation and use high-quality instructional materials that focus on grade-level content and build on prior knowledge, while offering any needed supports. When States and 21st CCLC subgrantees support program participants with tutoring, they should rely on the best available evidence, such as using trained educators as tutors, providing intensive tutoring at least three times each week in small groups, emphasizing attendance and focused worktime, and aligning with evidence-based curriculum and practices happening during the school day to support in-classroom success. The [National Partnership for Student Success](#) provides technical assistance on establishing high-quality tutoring programs.

Additional information about specific evidence-based practices in out-of-school time is available in [Supporting Learning Acceleration with American Rescue Plan Funds](#), the [ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume 2](#), and [Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time](#). We encourage you to ensure that the strategies your subgrantees employ are designed to meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, migratory students, and students experiencing homelessness or in foster care. The Department's IES' [What Works Clearinghouse](#) (WWC) also provides evidence-based resources that can help you and your subgrantees plan effective before- and after-school and summer programs. WWC includes a series of [practice guides](#) that may be helpful, including [Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement](#).

We also want to highlight the Biden-Harris Administration's [National Partnership for Student Success](#) (NPSS) and the Department's [Engage Every Student Initiative](#), which are public-private partnerships that support learning recovery, including efforts to reengage and engage students, and can support your efforts in using these new 21st CCLC funds. NPSS is focused on increasing the number of tutors, mentors, student success coaches, integrated student services coordinators, and postsecondary education transition coaches, which could include caring adults serving in 21st CCLC programs. The Engage Every Student initiative aims to ensure every student has access to high-quality out-of-school-time learning opportunities, such as those offered through 21st CCLC. Both provide opportunities for building and expanding networks and identifying and implementing best practices that support improved student engagement and attendance.

We will continue providing resources focused on attendance and engagement for middle school and high school students. Thank you for the service and support you provide for students and families. If you have additional questions, please contact the 21st CCLC team at 21stCCLC@ed.gov.