21st Century

Community

Learning

Centers

**Supplement**

Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201



This document is available in alternate formats upon request

**1.10.1 Federal Absolute Priorities**

[**http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/titleI/titleIsch/index.html**](http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/titleI/titleIsch/index.html)

**3.4 Project Narrative**

The Project Narrative must:

1. Be succinct and clear. The review panel needs to understand quickly and easily the components of your project and how they work together to address the requirements of the program.
2. Do not assume the review panel is familiar with your project; the review panel represents diverse backgrounds. Avoid jargon, and define all acronyms.
3. Proofread the narrative once it is complete. Check for style inconsistencies, redundancies, factual omissions, and unexplained assumptions. The narrative should contain a minimum amount of errors. A good strategy is to let someone unfamiliar with the project read and critique the proposal before you submit it to MSDE.
4. Be as detailed as possible. Use the entire page limit to explain your project.

**3.4.1 Need for Project**

1. Clearly define the main problem or obstacle the 21st Century Community Learning Center will address.
2. Present quantitative data (e.g., test scores, absentee rates, suspension rates, and parents’ educational levels) and qualitative data in support of quantitative data (e.g., interviews, focus groups). Data must pertain to the specific population and schools the program will serve as well as the parents of the students that must be provided literacy and related educational services.
3. State what data were collected to confirm the existence of the problem, the sources of the data, and the methods used to collect them. Possible data sources include the Maryland Report Card and the local management board’s needs assessment.
4. Use data from multiple stakeholders from the local community including representative numbers of students, parents, and school staff.
5. Identify who is affected by the problem; state when and where the problem exists; and, describe the wider impact on the local community if the problem is not addressed.
6. Document the factors contributing to the problem.
7. Document current or past efforts to address the problem.
8. Explain why the current or past efforts failed or are inadequate to address the total need.

**3.4.2 Project Design (including Evidence of Promise with Citations)**

## In addition to academic achievement, the Extent of Need may have identified additional areas of need of the target population, such as social and emotional development. This section must detail the proposed strategies and activities to meet these needs. For example, describe plans for resiliency and relationship building opportunities that strengthen youths’ relationships with adults, their school, and community. What activities will help participants identify and avoid behaviors and situations that put them at risk? Describe activities that might involve support group counseling, mentoring, and substance abuse and/or violence prevention programming.

The law authorizing 21st Century Community Learning Centers emphasizes that core academic programs or activities supported with these funds are supported by scientifically-based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will be successful. Scientifically-based research, as defined in Title IX of the reauthorized ESEA, is research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs. This means research that:

(1) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;

(2) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

(3) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;

(4) is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment, experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;

(5) ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and

(6) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

In the narrative, explain how the proposed strategies are supported by research. Be sure to cite references in the narrative using the American Psychological Association (APA) format.

*Strategies* (e.g., math instruction using XYZ Math Curriculum) are broad approaches (methods, procedures, techniques) employed to accomplish a program’s outcomes. *Activities* (e.g., one-on-one math tutoring by trained volunteers) are the specific steps taken to accomplish the project objectives, and involve direct service to students and their families. They may take place on a single date or over a period of time.

Do not address the elements of the management plan in this section. Actions outlined in the management plan are not activities. While these actions are needed to facilitate direct service, they do not render direct service themselves. Examples include the purchasing of equipment, the hiring of staff, evaluation procedures, and steering committee meetings.

## In addition to describing and justifying the proposed strategies and activities, the narrative must:

1. Describe how the target group will be identified. Describe how the selection will occur and how invitations will be extended. Show how the selection criteria are aligned with the population’s needs as described in the Extent of Need and with the intended outcomes. Describe how information about the program (including its location) will be disseminated to the community in a manner that is understandable and accessible.
2. Describe a day in the program, including how activities begin, and activities in which students participate. Provide a brief “walk-through.” Programs must plan for one hour uninterrupted academic time and one hour uninterrupted enrichment time. Highly qualified teachers must be on the academic staff.
3. Describe how students and staff will be actively and productively engaged. If program time is to be used for homework completion, it must be in addition to the required academic and enrichment time.
4. Describe the frequency and duration of the program and justify how this will meet the needs of the target group. School-year programs ideally are offered at least four days per week; applicants proposing to operate school-year programs for three days per week must provide a justification. Summer-only programs must be offered for at least 20 days during summer months.
5. Describe how the program will reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students. Including how and how often program staff communicates with school staff, how academic instruction is aligned with school, district, and the College and Career Ready Standards.
6. Describe the types of services to be offered to support the literacy and related educational development of the families of participating children based on the needs identified in the Extent of Need. Provide evidence that these services are likely to have the intended impact as measured by the project’s objectives and milestones.
7. Cite the evidence that the proposed strategies/activities are effective.
8. Address the extent to which these strategies/activities have been implemented with diverse populations and/or with populations similar to the target population.
9. Explain how these strategies/activities have been used to address needs similar to those described in the Extent of Need.
10. Describe plans to monitor attendance that are likely to result in clear communication with parents and improved student participation, including how the program addresses the issue of students absent from school, students with early dismissal, and notifying parents when students are absent from the program.
11. Explain how students will travel safely to and from the center and home. Include a transportation plan that is likely to result in students being safe and secure.
12. Describe the professional development that will be provided to staff implementing the strategies/activities that are likely to result in high-quality program implementation, including but not limited to curriculum/content, service-learning, character education. Articulate who will provide this professional development; who will be eligible to participate; frequency of professional development; and how the staff will be held accountable for implementing and sharing lessons learned from the professional development. Describe how new staff will be trained during the program year; and how professional development needs of staff will be assessed on an ongoing basis.
13. Describe how the screening process (background checks and/or fingerprinting) will be conducted on all staff and volunteers working directly with children, in accordance with standards set forth in Section 5-560 *et seq.* of the Family Law Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.
14. Describe staff and, if applicable, volunteers’ roles and responsibilities, including how they will be selected, trained, and supervised.
15. Address all issues relative to the provision of equitable participation as set forth in the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (see Signed Assurances 4.6).
16. Describe how the program will accommodate students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Including how the program ensures that the specific requirements of each student’s IEP are implemented in out-of-school-time activities.
17. Describe how the program will accommodate students and families for whom English is a second language.
18. Detail how the program will provide comparable opportunities in designing the program for the participation of both public- and private-school students in the area served by the grant; consult with private school officials during the design and development of the 21st CCLC program on issues such as how the children's needs will be identified and what services will be offered ; disseminate information about the center (including its location) to students attending non-public schools and surrounding community; provide equitable services to private school students and their families; and provide services to private school students that are secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

In addition to providing a narrative, add the Strategies and Activities in summarized format to the Alignment Worksheet (Exhibit 3). The purpose of the Alignment Worksheet is to demonstrate the alignment among needs, objectives/milestones, and strategies/activities. The worksheet can be lengthened as needed.

**3.4.3 Objectives, Milestones, and Anticipated Outcomes**

Objectives and Milestones are measurable, realistic, and outcome-oriented statements that reference state, local or school-defined data or standards and identify the target population.

Objectives and Milestones are all outcomes. Outcomes are statements that describe measurable changes the program intends to bring about in the participants. Every outcome should describe an anticipated change in a target population. In addition, they set standards of progress towards alleviating the problems identified in the Extent of Need.

Outcome-oriented statements are different from process-oriented statements. Process statements describe important steps that are expected to occur in order to achieve the intended outcomes, but are not outcomes in themselves. Statements that describe strategies or management issues are not proper outcome statements. For example, the statement “100% of program staff will attend a professional development workshop within the first quarter” is not an outcome-oriented statement because it describes the process of program operation, not an intended change in the target population. While programs may benefit from tracking such process-based data, they should not be included in the Objectives and Milestones section. Programs may elect to include such process-oriented statements in their Evaluation Plan.

Objectives and Milestones must:

1. Identify the target population. Specify the population the outcome addresses. It is imperative that the proposal establish Objectives and Milestones for every target population the project is designed to affect. The project must aim to increase student achievement and parent literacy; therefore, the proposal must have objectives and milestones for both students and families.
2. Be realistic. Outcomes must be attainable. Establish realistic outcomes based on a review of the research literature relevant to academic out-of-school-time interventions.
3. Be measurable. Outcomes must specify a measurement instrument or source. Reference indicators (e.g., test scores, absentee rates, report card grades, promotion rates, parental educational levels).
4. Set deadlines. Outcome statements must set a specific date (e.g., month and year) for attainment.
5. Reference state, local, or school-defined baseline data or standards. Baseline performance provides a basis for comparison in order to interpret the established outcome. Baseline data are likely to be either based on past performance or data that will be collected at the beginning of the program year.

**Objectives**

Objectives are the outcomes intended to be accomplished each year of the project and are the specific results the program aims to achieve within the year. They underlie all planning and activities and serve as the basis for evaluating performance. Objectives are annual incremental steps, such as yearly increases in the percentage of participants scoring Proficient or Advanced on the math National Standardized Assessment. Other objectives may address the factors that contribute to the main problem; an example would be an objective aiming to decrease problem behaviors as a way of attaining a math goal.

Examples of objectives:

*Objective 1.1: By 2016, 25% of the program’s first cohort (participating 4th grade students) will score Proficient or better on the national standardized assessment. (100% of these students scored at Basic on the mathematics National Standardized Assessment in the third grade.)*

*Objective 1.2: By 2017, 35% of the program’s first cohort (participating 5th grade students) will score at Proficient or better on the Grade 5 math National Standardized Assessment. (100% of these students scored at Basic on the mathematics National Standardized Assessment in the third grade.)*

*Objective 1.3: By 2018, 40% of the program’s first cohort (participating 6th grade students) will score at Proficient or better on the Grade 6 math National Standardized Assessment. (100% of these students scored at Basic on the mathematics National Standardized Assessment in the third grade.)*

**Milestones**

Milestones must be established to measure progress multiple times during the program year, because objectives are not evaluated until the end of the year. For school-year programs, milestones should be evaluated quarterly during the year, where appropriate. For summer programs, milestones should be set frequently enough to allow ongoing program revisions.

Milestones are intended to indicate progress toward an objective, so each milestone must be related to an objective. Milestones are indicators of progress, and may not use exactly the same measurement tool as the objective to which they are related. However, the measure used should be adequate to gauge progress toward the objective.

A project may take months before it can have a significant impact upon clients, or the rate of improvement may level off over time. Milestones should anticipate this and be gauged accordingly. Milestones should not be overly ambitious.

These are examples of milestones that could be related to the above sample objectives for the first program year:

*Milestone 1.1.1: By the end of the 1st quarter, 40% of the program’s first cohort (participating 4th grade students) will receive a grade of C or better in math on their 1st quarter school report card, compared to 35% of comparable students last year.*

*Milestone 1.1.2: By the end of the 2nd quarter, 45% of the program’s first cohort (participating 4th grade students) will receive a grade of C or better in math on their 2nd quarter school report card, compared to 40% of comparable students last year.*

*Milestone 1.1.3: By the end of the 3rd quarter, 60% of the program’s first cohort (participating 4th grade students) will receive a grade of C or better in math on their 3rd quarter school report card, compared to 45% of comparable students last year.*

**3.5.5 Management Plan Worksheet**

The Management Plan Worksheet (Exhibit 4) details the major management actions and the timeframe and specific persons responsible for each action.

The Management Plan Worksheet supports the proposed Plan of Operation, but includes only management actions, not direct service activities. Examples of management actions are hiring of staff, ordering equipment, developing curricula, meeting with the evaluator, and holding steering committee meetings. None of these actions render direct service itself, but enable direct service activities to take place.

On the Management Plan Worksheet, in chronological order, list all major management actions necessary to implement the project during the first year of funding. Assign an approximate date for each action. If the action is ongoing, indicate the range of dates over which it will be implemented. Indicate on the worksheet who is responsible for accomplishing each action.

Reporting requirements made by the funder, MSDE, should also be included in the management plan.

**3.6 Evaluation and Dissemination**

The Evaluation and Dissemination section must include a plan for a professional, independent evaluation of the program. This evaluation must be conducted annually, culminating in a summative evaluation reflecting the entire three-year project. This section must include specific evaluation questions; an evaluation strategy; and a description of proposed data instruments, collection processes, and analytic methods. This section must reflect a plan to assess progress toward objectives and milestones. In addition, this section must show how the evaluation will be an integral element in the project’s planning, design, and implementation, and explain how the evaluation will enable project managers to determine which strategies and activities have been successful, and those that need to be revised. Finally, include a plan for dissemination of evaluation findings, both to stakeholders and to broader, national audiences.

The evaluator’s résumé must be included if one has already been identified; otherwise a specific job description must be included (Section 2.5.3). Refer to Guidance for Local Evaluations of Maryland 21st CCLC Programs (Exhibit 11) when designing an evaluation plan and selecting an evaluator.

This section must:

1. Specify the questions the evaluation will seek to answer, based on the project’s objectives and Plan of Operation. These questions must enable project leaders to assess progress toward objectives and milestones, and enable project managers to determine which strategies and activities have been successful, and those that need to be revised.
2. Describe the proposed data and measurement instruments that will be used.
3. Explain how data will be collected, including who is responsible and a timeline.
4. Describe how the integrity and accuracy of data will be ensured.
5. Specify the third-party individual or group who will conduct the external evaluation, or provide a detailed job description and the selection process by which a qualified evaluator will be identified.
6. Describe how and when evaluation findings will be used to make improvements in the project.
7. Describe how the evaluation’s findings will be disseminated to the major stakeholders (including participants and their families) and all individuals with an interest in the project. Explain how dissemination formats will be tailored to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders.

**3.7 Coordinating With Other Programs**

This section must identify federal, state, and local programs that also offer afterschool services and that will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program to make the most effective use of public resources. However, 21st CCLC funds awarded to local grantees must be used only to supplement the level of Federal, State, local, and other non-federal funds and not to replace funds that would have been available to conduct activities if 21st CCLC funds had not been available.

Title I funds, in concert with the 21st CCLC program funds, can provide extended learning programs in schools that integrate enrichment and recreation opportunities with academic services. 21st CCLC program funds can also meet the needs of parents seeking supplemental educational services (such as tutoring and academic enrichment) for their children. Local 21st CCLC programs may also work in collaboration with programs to supplement services to target populations such as migrant students.

Other Federal programs can also complement local 21st CCLC programs. 21st CCLC funds may not be used to purchase food. Many current 21st CCLC programs are eligible to receive funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service for “After-school Snacks,” and in some cases to provide supper to young children. Local communities can also participate in USDA’s Summer Food Service program. These snacks and meals can contribute to the nutritional services provided in local programs. Services made available through funds from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) can be combined with 21st CCLC programs to serve children outside of the regular school day. 21st CCLC programs can also utilize Federal funding available through local prevention grants under Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the U.S. Department of Justice). Further information on local prevention grants can be found on the OJJDP website, http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/titlev/index.html.

**3.8 Partners Plan Worksheet**

A partner is any organization other than the grantee that will actively contribute to the project. This includes the school(s) being served, government agencies, libraries, non-profit organizations, and businesses. Partners include subcontractors, organizations that are under contract with the grantee to provide grant-funded activities or services.

The Partners Plan Worksheet (Exhibit 5) shows the project’s partners, their respective roles in the project, the benefits each expects to receive, and the specific contributions each partner will make to the project in the form of financial support, equipment, personnel, or other resources. Also includes which objectives their services will help to achieve.

The Partners Plan Worksheet must include:

1. Partner: Provide the name of the partner organization.
2. Role in Project: Specify the partner’s role in the project (e.g., academic instruction, enrichment, family services, professional development, character education, service-learning, volunteers, or transportation).
3. Objective: Identify the objective that this partner will help the project meet. Objectives can be referenced by number as shown in Alignment Worksheet.
4. Benefit to Project: Specify who will benefit from the partner’s contribution (e.g., parents, students, staff) and how they will benefit (e.g., parents will learn how to read to their children at home or students will be able to envision themselves going to college).
5. Specific Contribution to Project: Specify the deliverable the partner will provide (e.g., 10 one-hour workshops; 25 college student volunteers, 4 times per week, and 2 hours per day).
6. Benefit to Partner: Specify how the partner will benefit from the program.

**3.9 Sustainability**

This section must:

1. Explain how the project will be sustained after 21st CCLC funding ends.
2. Describe planned efforts to secure additional partners and funding sources.
3. Describe plans for maintaining partnerships beyond the funding cycle.

**3.10.1 Itemized Budget (Exhibit 6)**

Both requested and in-kind funds must be reasonable with current market prices. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase food, facilities, or vehicles, or support new construction.

The itemized budget must:

1. Detail every year of the project in a separate itemized budget for each year.
2. Specify and detail how the expense was calculated for each line item.
3. Break down general expenses into specific line items. For example, “meeting expenses” can be broken down into room rental and photocopying.
4. Clearly show the requested funds and in-kind contributions for each line item.
5. Indicate the source of each in-kind contribution.
6. Include funds for at least two project staff members to attend a two‑day national meeting (co-sponsored by the United States Department of Education) each year of the project.
7. Include funds to cover travel and lodging expenses for at least three persons to attend one national and two regional training activities during each year of the project (actual attendance will be contingent on MSDE approval).
8. Include funds for the project director to attend four state grantee networking meetings during each year of the project.
9. Include funds for the project director to attend 1 two-day state grantee retreat each year of the project.
10. Reflect in-kind levels at 10% in the Year 1; 15% in Year 2; and 20% in Year 3.