



21st Century Community Learning Centers Providing Afterschool Supports to Communities Nationwide

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs. The *No Child Left Behind Act* reauthorized 21st CCLC in 2002, transferring the administration of the grants from the U.S. Department of Education to the State Education Agencies. Each state receives funds based on its share of Title I funding for low-income students. Funds are also allotted to outlying areas and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* narrowed the focus of 21st CCLC from a community learning center model, where all members of the community benefited from access to school resources such as teachers, computer labs, gymnasiums and classrooms, to an afterschool program model that provides the following services to students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools:

- Academic enrichment activities that can help students meet state and local achievement standards.
- A broad array of additional services designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program, such as: *drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs, and character education programs.*
- Literacy and related educational development services to the families of children who are served in the program. (U.S. Department of Education, 2003)

Funding History, 21st CCLC		
<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Amount Appropriated</i>	<i>Amount Authorized in No Child Left Behind Act</i>
1998	\$40 million	n/a
1999	\$200 million	n/a
2000	\$453 million	n/a
2001	\$846 million	\$1 billion
2002	\$1 billion	\$1.25 billion
2003	\$993.5 million	\$1.5 billion
2004	\$991 million	\$1.75 billion
2005	\$991 million	\$2 billion
2006	\$981 million	\$2.25 billion
2007	\$981 million	\$2.5 billion
2008	\$1.081 billion	\$2.5 billion
2009	\$1.131 billion	\$2.5 billion

Conversations about the next reauthorization are underway. The Afterschool Alliance has developed a set of recommendations to help ensure the continued effectiveness of the program and to provide adequate supports to local afterschool programs.

Since administration of the grants was transferred to the states, most states have made four or more rounds of new grants. There are now 3,309 grants funding afterschool programs serving 1,456,447 children and youth in 9,824 school-based and community-based centers across the country. Other characteristics:

- The average grant size for 2006 grantees was \$310,685.
- On average, there are three centers/sites per grant with an annual budget of \$104,000. The average annual cost per student ranges from \$673 to \$1215.
- About two in three grantees are school districts and about one in five grantees are community-based organizations, yet roughly nine in ten centers are located in schools.
- 91 percent of centers are open four or more days per week and 67 percent of centers are open at least 11 hours per week.

- Academic assistance, enrichment activities and recreational activities are the most common services offered by programs.
- About half of centers serve elementary school students exclusively, and at least two thirds of all centers serve some elementary students. About 36 percent of centers serve middle school students, but only 20 percent of these centers exclusively target this population. Finally, 15 percent of centers serve high school students. Only five percent of centers exclusively target high school students.
- More than half of attendees qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. In addition, about 17 percent of the participants have limited English proficiency, a figure which is greater than the overall percentage of LEP students in the U.S. (11 percent).
- The average number of regular attendees per center is 82, while the average number of total attendees per center is 148.
- As centers mature over time they tend to move away from an emphasis on recreation and move toward a greater focus on academic enrichment. Trends indicate that more mature programs, particularly those that primarily focus on academic enrichment, have a higher rate of average regular attendance than centers that are relatively new. More mature academic enrichment programs have an average regular attendance rate of 71 percent while newer programs average a rate of 48 percent.

(Data courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education and Learning Point Associates, 2005, 2006 and 2007)

Evaluations and teacher reports have revealed positive results in behavior and achievement for students who regularly attend 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

- Annual performance report data from 21st CCLC grantees across the country demonstrate that regular attendees improve their reading (43 percent) and math grades (49 percent). (Learning Point Associates, 2007)
- Students who attend 21st CCLC programs more regularly are more likely to improve their grades, test scores and overall academic behavior. More mature 21st CCLC programs have greater rates of regular attendance and therefore are more effective in improving students' academic behavior. (Learning Point Associates, 2007)
- The Promising Afterschool Programs Study, a study of about 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students, found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs (including programs funded by 21st CCLC) over two years demonstrated gains of up to 20 percentiles and 12 percentiles in standardized math test scores respectively, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours. (Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2007)
- Elementary school students attending LA's BEST afterschool program—a program funded in part by 21st CCLC—improved their regular school day attendance and reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college. Additionally, LA's BEST participants are 20 percent less likely to drop out of school and 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities compared to matched nonparticipants. (UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing, June 2000, December 2005 and September 2007)
- A state evaluation in New Hampshire found that 59 percent of elementary school and 62 percent of middle school students who regularly attended showed progress in overall academic performance. (Harvard Family Research Project Afterschool Evaluation Symposium, September 2005)
- A report from the University of Florida on the state's 21st CCLCs found that the program was effective in improving students' academic performance, school attendance, disciplinary actions and social behaviors. (Harvard Family Research Project Afterschool Evaluation Symposium, September 2005)

- A study of 21st CCLC-funded afterschool programs in New England found that children who participated in the 21st CCLC-funded programs had significantly higher reading achievement and were rated by teachers as holding greater expectancies of success compared to children in other types of afterschool care. The differences were greatest for those children who were rated as highly engaged in the 21st CCLC-funded programs. (Mahoney, Lord and Carryl, *Child Development*, July/August 2005)

The 21st CCLC initiative has spurred state and local investments in afterschool and helped leverage additional funding to build sustainable afterschool infrastructures.

- The typical 21st CCLC grantee has 6 partners who contribute to the project by providing services and resources not directly funded by 21st CCLC. These partners include community-based organizations; faith-based organizations, nationally affiliated non-profits, such as YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs; libraries; museums; health clinics; and universities. Contributions from partners include volunteer staff, supplies and materials or services such as evaluation or fundraising assistance. (U.S. Department of Education and Learning Point Associates, 2005)
- 21st CCLC grant money allows programs to leverage and link together funding streams that can lead to sustainable programs. On average, 21st CCLC grantees have two other funding sources. These sources include the local school districts, state funding, other federal funding, philanthropic and private funding. (U.S. Department of Education and Learning Point Associates, 2005)
- 38 states have started Statewide Afterschool Networks to develop state-level supports and policies to ensure quality and sustainable afterschool programs in their states.
- Highlights of recent state initiatives include:
 - In **California**, the state reached the budget “trigger” for Proposition 49 funding in 2006, releasing \$428 million in new funding for afterschool programs for elementary and middle school students. This brings California’s total afterschool budget to \$550 million, not including the state’s allotment for federal 21st CCLC dollars.
 - In **Colorado**, the state legislature passed HB 1248, allocating \$300,000 in new funding for afterschool programs.
 - **Georgia** made a total of \$14 million available to its Division of Family and Children Services in the Department of Human Resources for grants to school and community-based afterschool programs. The funding includes an allocation of \$10 million from its federal TANF funds and \$4 million in state revenues.
 - The **Iowa** general assembly approved two new sources of funds for afterschool programs totaling \$3.5 million.
 - The **Massachusetts** legislature and Governor approved a \$1 million increase to the After School and Out-of-School-Time grant program, doubling the amount appropriated during the previous year’s legislative session for a total of \$2 million.
 - In **Missouri**, the legislature approved funding for two new afterschool initiatives: METS (Math, Engineering, Technology and Science), an initiative to support informal math and science learning, and Healthy Lifestyles, which provides programming to address poor nutrition and childhood obesity. The legislature funded each initiative at \$500,000 for a total of \$1 million.
 - The **Minnesota** legislature approved \$5.3 million in new funds for afterschool programs over two years. This is the first new money allocated to afterschool in the state in at least five years.
 - In **New Mexico**, the state is investing \$2 million in a new afterschool enrichment program, along with approximately \$2 million in additional funding for afterschool, weekend and

summer programs targeted to specific local communities or for specific purposes, such as obesity prevention.

- The **Washington** legislature approved \$3 million for grants to afterschool programs—this is the first time Washington has dedicated state funds to afterschool.
- Beyond spurring additional investments, a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College found that every dollar invested in afterschool actually saves between three and thirteen dollars in costs ranging from grade retention to future incarceration. Based on the Rose Institute’s estimate, the current investment in 21st CCLC saves more than \$3 billion in taxpayer dollars. (*The Costs and Benefits of Afterschool Programs*, Rose Institute, September 2002)

Despite strong and sustained public support—two out of three Americans see afterschool programs as an absolute necessity—funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers has remained relatively stagnant, leaving a great demand unfulfilled.

- Funding for 21st CCLC is currently at an all time high of \$1.13 billion, but is still less than half of the \$2.5 billion authorized by the *No Child Left Behind Act*.
- Current funding levels do not come close to meeting the nationwide demand:
 - There are 15.3 million children in the United States whose parents would send them to an afterschool program if one were available. (*America After 3 PM*, Afterschool Alliance, May 2004)
 - In 2006, 1,247 organizations applied for 21st CCLC afterschool grants. Just 325 of them received funding – a funding rate of only 26 percent. (Learning Point Associates, 2007)
 - 52 percent of 21st CCLC program providers say funding is down a little or a lot and only 12 percent feel secure about their funding for the next three to five years. (*Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk*, Afterschool Alliance, October 2006)
 - The vast majority of FY2009 dollars will support existing grantees. While most states will be able to make a limited number of new awards, others will struggle to support existing grantees since funding in some states has actually decreased due to changes in the Title I formula.

In these difficult economic times, American families need quality afterschool programs more than ever. In most families both parents or the single parent is in the workforce. In communities today, 14.3 million children take care of themselves after the school day ends. The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex. The afterschool hours can be a time for trouble or a time for kids to learn new skills, develop relationships with caring adults and prepare for the future. In a country where only one third of young people graduate high school prepared for college, work and citizenship, we can’t afford to waste the after school hours.

Afterschool programs provide children a safe and stimulating environment in the hours after the school day. For the sake of our children, our families and our communities, afterschool programs absolutely must exist. America’s working parents need the support of 21st Century Community Learning Centers to help keep their children safe during the afternoon hours; schools need the support to meet the growing challenges of preparing a 21st Century workforce; and children need these safe, enriching environments to learn and grow.

Federal funding sources such as 21st CCLC are essential to help states and local communities establish support systems that make afterschool programs and the extra learning time they provide an expectation, not an afterthought. The 14.3 million children who are unsupervised after school deserve better.