

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Maryland Out-of-School Time Programs for the Future (MD OST PFTF) Grant Program Application

Customer Service Session Questions and Answers

The stakeholder questions outlined below were presented during the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC Customer Service Support Sessions (CSSS) hosted on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, and Tuesday, March 12, 2024. The answers are posted for public viewing to ensure equitable access to information in consideration of the application and competitive review process.

Eligible entities are encouraged to refer to the Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC website located [here](#) for additional information regarding the grant program as well as the FY 2025 Grant Information Guide (GIG) and Application.

A. Updated Information

1. **MODIFICATION: Total Number of Applications Submitted by an Eligible Entity**

The GIG posted on February 23, 2024, incorporated a limitation to the number of applications submitted by an eligible entity. There is no longer a limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by an eligible entity. An updated GIG is available on the website.

2. **Reimbursement Invoice Grant Program**

The 21st CCLC program is a reimbursement program. Subgrantees incur costs and then request reimbursement as aligned with an approved budget. Sufficient cash flow is imperative for the start-up and implementation of the grant funded program. Once approved, reimbursement requests can take 6-8 weeks for payment processing.

3. **State Absolute Priorities**

The State Absolute Priorities will be measured on a 5-point scale.

B. General Questions

1. Is the total funding available dependent on passage of the 21st CCLC FFY24 budget by Congress?

Yes. MSDE issues awards based upon Maryland’s Title IV Part B Federal funding allocations.

2. Are there any districts that have not utilized these funds in the past and would the lack of experience with the program impact a proposal either positively or negatively?

MSDE welcomes ALL eligible entities to apply for the 21st CCC funding.

3. Can you define jurisdiction for purposes of this grant?

Jurisdictions are defined as the 24 local education agencies (LEAs) in Maryland. A listing of the LEAS can be found [here](#).

4. As a non-profit agency hoping to collaborate with a school, will we have to work through a LEA?

The non-profit agency is eligible to submit an independent application; however, a partnership with the LEA must be approved by the local superintendent. Refer to the GIG page 18 for additional information regarding the LEA/School Participation Agreement.

5. Can a school apply for this grant to provide services to itself?

Yes, a school can apply but would need approval from the Local School Superintendent. Refer to the Program Description on page 3 for eligible entities, and the additional information regarding the LEA/School Participation Agreement on page 18.

6. Can two organizations in separate applications serve the same school if each application serves two different demographics?

Yes, this is allowable.

- 7. If an applicant wants to serve a school not already funded through 21st CCLC, can an applicant apply for only Summer, or does it need to be both summer and school year?**

The eligible program models are school year only, school year and summer, or Summer only.

- 8. If applying jointly with an LEA, does the program have to serve multiple schools/locations?**

No. A program can serve one school or multiple schools.

- 9. Can two applications be submitted, outlining the same programmatic approach, but to two different groups of schools, i.e. Application One is serving schools A, B, and C, and Application Two is serving schools D, E, and F?**

Yes, applications can be submitted to serve different schools with a similar program design; however, a best practice would refer to the needs assessment of each of the proposed populations and explain how the design addresses the target population.

- 10. If applying to serve multiple schools, is a separate application required for each school?**

No. An applicant can submit more than one application serving different schools. This would be determined by the applicant and project design. Considerations include the amount of funding being requested, as well as the needs assessment and program design.

- 11. Please identify if the funding amount requested in the application is annual or for the three-year term?**

The funding amount requested is the amount that will be awarded for each year of the grant.

- 12. What is the eligibility of current MSDE OST Grant funded entities?**

Current Out-of-School Time (OST) grant funded programs are unable to apply to request additional FY2025 21st CCLC funding to serve the same school(s).

- 13. Can a school with a 21st CCLC program that ends on June 30, 2023, be included in a new applicant's proposal? They have never served the school and it is a new relationship.**

If the applicant is a current OST grant fund recipient and the cohort closes on or before August 31, 2024, the applicant can serve the same school(s) that they previously served in the previous cohort.

14. If an applicant currently receives OST funding, can the same schools with a summer only grant apply for this grant (FY2025) to implement a School Year Only program? The applicant would serve the same schools, but not at the same time.

A current OST grant funded program cannot apply to receive additional funding to serve the same school, whether the program type remains the same or is enhanced. A current OST grant funded program can amend the current program to offer a different variation of programming, if applicable.

15. Can programs serve students in PreK who attend a Title 1 School?

Students must have entered kindergarten to be served by the funded grant program. Pre-K is not identified as an eligible population. Applicants report grade selection beginning with kindergarten students.

16. Our programs focus on civic education and college and career preparation but are not necessarily aligned with a core subject (Math/English/Government, etc.). Are those subjects necessary?

An applicant must ensure that the instructional time addresses the core subject area(s) and aligns the needs assessment and performance outcomes. Please refer to the Goals and Outcomes section. An outcome of the grant is to integrate academic instruction in the core subject areas to drive student success on reading and mathematics state assessments.

17. Could real-time synchronous online instruction count towards the weekly 12 hours of instruction?

Online instruction cannot be counted towards the minimum hours of programming. The programming hours must be in-person. The application does not discuss the use of asynchronous or virtual offerings.

C. Eligibility

- 1. Is the list eligible schools list inclusive for the Title I schools, or may we serve any school in the county that meets the 40% FARM rate? (GIG, page 6)**

Applicants must refer to the [Title I Schools](#) provided on page 6 of the Grant Information Guide.

- 2. Please explain what is meant on Page 6 by "An applicant cannot propose to serve a school that they current provide services to with MSDE funding." Does that mean we cannot use 21st CCLC funds to serve Title I schools? Or community schools?**

An applicant currently funded through other OST campaigns (i.e.: Public Schools Opportunities Enhancement Program, 21st CCLC FY24 Programs for the Future Cohort) cannot propose to serve the same school with FY2025 21st CCLC PFTF funding.

- 3. Can an application be submitted for just one school for FY2025 21st CCLC (not funded by any other 21st CCLC grant)?**

An applicant can apply to serve only one school or multiple schools.

- 4. Is there a minimum number of students served?**

No. There is not a minimum number of students served requirement. The total number of students served should be based upon the needs assessment and the program design.

- 5. If a community organization applies for funding, will they be required to submit a Partnership Agreement Form with their application and will they be the fiscal agent for the grant?**

A community partner will have to submit a LEA/School Participation Agreement that identifies the partnering school(s) to be served by the program and signed by the LEA Superintendent. The community organization submitting the application will serve as the fiscal agent.

D. Goals and Outcomes

1. **There is a measurable outcome regarding Grade Point Averages (GPA). The proposal is to serve in grades PreK – 5 that does calculate GPA's. Should the applicant write "Does Not Apply" in the textbox for this Outcome?**

This would be appropriate. An application best practice would be to include an explanation justifying why it "does not apply" to reduce any assumption. Additionally, please note the grades eligible for service begin with kindergarten.

2. **The GIG page 15 refers to addressing at least "one additional strategy prioritized by the jurisdiction being served." Does an applicant select from SEA goals 4,7 and 8 to create this Performance Indicator?**

Yes, this is correct.

E. Federal Absolute Priorities

1. **Do we need to reach out to every non-public and private school in our jurisdiction for the consultation requirement?**

Yes, the schools approved under Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.09.09 are often referred to as "private schools" are available for review by jurisdiction on MSDE Private School website [here](#). When engaging in the consultation process, applicants are encouraged to utilize MSDE approved resources:

- [ESSA Affirmation of Consultation Form May 2020.docx](#)
- [ESSA Intent to Participate Form May 2020.docx](#)

2. Federal Absolute Priority #4 requires compliance for safety standards. We plan to operate a program within a public-school building. Do we need to provide any other documents besides stating that our program will operate in a public school to meet this priority?

If the program operates within an MSDE approved local school building the submission of the Use of Occupancy is not required. If the program does NOT operate within a MSDE approved school building this requirement applies. A statement of acknowledgement that the program is proposed to operate in an MSDE approved local school building. A best practice would be to ensure that the school partner letter of commitment incorporates the use of the facility as a contribution to partnership.

3. What are acceptable examples of efforts to notify the community?

Acceptable examples may include website posting, social media campaigns, marketing flyers, local Board of Education meetings, school-based community meetings, etc.

F. Performance Priorities

1. How would a current recipient know the risk assessment rating that will be used to calculate the performance priorities?

A current recipient should refer to the FY 2024 Notification of Grant Award (NOGA) for additional information to determine the risk assessment rating.

G. Competitive Priorities

1. How much are Competitive Priorities worth?

The competitive priorities will be evaluated on the 5-point scale.

H. Project Narrative

1. Do certified teachers need to be the ones delivering academic instruction and content?

MSDE highly encourages certified teachers to provide academic instruction.

2. Are there a minimum number of Partners required?

No. The only required partner is the LEA/School Partner supported by the local Superintendent signed LEA/School Participation Agreement.

3. Page 17 of the GIG states that the partner is any organization that will actively contribute to the project. Should the external evaluator be considered a partner and included in our Partners' Plan worksheet?

Yes, the external evaluator is defined as a partner.

4. Page 17 of the GIG references the Steering Committee. Should these members be listed in the narrative or in key personnel? No mention of resumes either. Are those required?

The steering committee members should be listed in the Plan of Operation and Key Personnel (page 12) narrative explanation of the application. Resumes for key personnel are to be submitted in the appendix. Steering Committee resumes will be required given the steering committee members are a part of the key personnel to govern the project.

5. What if an applicant does not know all the Steering Committee Members e.g., parent members, at the time of application submission? Can we provide the resume of the people whose resumes we have?

Yes, this is appropriate. If the application proceeds to the Validation stage final discussions will occur at that time.

I. Evaluation

1. What is the allowed budget for external evaluation?

Please refer to the GIG page 19 that references "OST Fiscal Guidance" for specific guidance on budget caps. The external evaluation maximum allocation cannot exceed 7% of the total budget.

2. Can an existing evaluator serve as an evaluator on a new application?

Yes, however, note there are restrictions on reasonable time and effort for one evaluator to complete more than one evaluation report. The maximum total hours committed to each award cannot exceed 40 hours of work per week for MSDE OST grant funded programs.

J. Budget

1. If an applicant submits an application for the school year and summer program, should the applicant submit two separate budget worksheets/narratives, one for school year and one for summer?

An applicant proposing the school year and summer must itemize in ONE budget worksheet that includes separate expenses for the school year and summer program.

2. Are student transportation costs allowable?

Yes, student transportation costs are an allowable expense.

3. Are the Department of Labor hourly wages rates applicable to this grant? We are struggling with the teacher's hourly rate, less than what is competitive in our area.

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics should be used as guidance to determine reasonable and allowable wage criteria. LEA data can be used to propose data and market informed rates and will require MSDE review.

4. If the LEA is the fiscal agent, do they have to submit an audit report?

No. LEAs are not required to submit an audit report

K. General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Statement

1. Is the GEPA statement part of the 25-page narrative limit? Or can it be submitted as an appendix?

The GEPA statement is part of the application and included in the 25-page limit. It is not to be submitted as a component of the appendices.