

**21st Century Community Learning Centers
FY 19 STEAM RFP
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**



**Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
359 North West Street, Suite 111
Jackson, Mississippi 39201**

February 25, 2019

1. Is audit required for all programs?
The FY19 STEAM 21st Century Community Learning Centers Request for Proposals (RFP) requires all applicants to provide a financial audit from the most recently completed fiscal year. **In the event an applicant does not meet the threshold of receiving \$750,000 in federal funds in a single year, the applicant must include a letter in the proposal package acknowledging this fact.** As stated on page 23 of the RFP, any non-federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more within a year in federal awards shall have a single or program specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F. Also, please see assurance 18. on page 65 of the RFP.
2. Will the webinar and training PowerPoint slides be posted on the MDE site?
Yes. The STEAM RFP webinar, STEAM RFP training PowerPoint slides, and recorded RFP training video will be posted on the 21st CCLC webpage on the MDE website <https://mdek12.org/OFP/Title-IV-Part-B>.
3. Can we use 21st CCLC dollars to pay anyone to write the grant?
No. Please see page 32 of the RFP that provides examples of unallowable grant expenditures. 21st CCLC grant funds cannot be used to pay for the preparation of the 21st CCLC grant proposal.
4. We have 3 locations and are applying for them to be under one grant. Is this considered a consortium?
No. This program would be considered as one grant with 3 program sites.
5. Do the partner letters have to be in a letter format? Can emails work?
Partner letters should be in letter format, indicating what the contributions will be. The letters should contain original signatures. Emails will not be accepted.
6. Do the project director and staff only work 9 hours?
No. The program should be operational for a minimum of 9 hours/week and 3 days/week. The staff work time is dependent upon the individual project needs.
7. Is the audit you are referring to, the entire financial audit conducted annual in the district? For the LEA, the financial audit may be the annual Single audit that is conducted for school districts.
8. Are we required to have a community meeting prior to submitting the application?
All applicants are required to notify their communities of the organization's intent to apply for a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. The organization determines what method of notification is best for the respective community.

9. How and when will funds be distributed or reimbursed?
All 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants are reimbursement only grants. All grantees are required to submit monthly requests for reimbursements. Reimbursements will not be processed until an official proposal and revised budget have been approved by the MDE.
10. Who can't get paid in this program in administration?
School principals cannot serve as project directors or site coordinators for 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant programs.
11. How will equitable services be calculated for non-public/private schools?
It is important to remember public schools are providing services to the non-public/private schools, not funds. Therefore, the non-public/private schools are invited to participate in the services in the proposed program. Please be reminded that transportation from the non-public/private school to the public-school site for students to participate is the responsibility of the grantee.
12. Does math have to be included as a subject area? Can we focus on art, literacy, technology and science and not explicitly math?
No. The STEAM 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs can focus on science, technology, engineering, arts, and/or mathematics.
13. Can one person hold more than one position in the program i.e. Can the project director be site coordinator with a lead teacher?
The organizational structure is determined by the needs of the proposed program. It is also important to remember that the individual cannot be paid for services rendered during the same time.
14. What are the 21st Century Program Roles and Responsibilities?
The STEAM 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs provide opportunities for academic enrichment activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session, such as before and after school or during summer recess, particularly for students who attend low-performing schools. The program serves students in grades 6-12 in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts and/or math.
15. Talk about the role of the external evaluator.
The external evaluator is a vendor who is charged with examining the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC program. The external evaluator should have experience in assessing measurable outcomes, analyzing data, and reporting findings that refine or improve educational afterschool programs.
16. What does sustainability look like?
Sustainability refers to the ability to continue the afterschool program services after the federal funds end. All applicants are to include a detailed plan for

sustainability to address how students' services will continue when there are no remaining grant funds.

17. Equitable Participation-Does the individual school applying for the grant only provide comparable opportunities to the private schools in the individual school's zone or the entire district? Include all private schools in the district?

The individual school applying for the grant should conduct consultation with private schools within the attendance zone of the entire school district.

18. Which parts of the proposal are most important to provide specific, concrete details? Obviously, the budget, but which other parts should we make sure to drill down into the details?

Each part of the proposal is important. Please note the maximum points for each section: Needs Assessment (20 pts), Program Plan and Implementation (60 pts), Budget (10 pts), and Evaluation Plan (10 pts).

19. Are project Coordinators mandated?

The organizational structure is determined by the needs of the proposed program.

20. Is the cost of recruiting/placement paid by the grant?

Recruitment of personnel for the performance of the 21st CCLC program is an allowable expenditure.

21. On the summary of partners table, what qualifies as a "partner"? Please provide an example.

Partners are individuals, organizations, agencies that contribute finances, tangible materials, goods, services, training, and/or volunteers to your 21st CCLC program.

22. What is the indirect cost percentage on this grant? How does the subgrantee calculate indirect costs if they are outside an LEA?

LEA subgrantees will use the restricted indirect cost rate assigned by the MDE Office of School Financial Services. Non-LEA subgrantees should use a restricted indirect cost rate not to exceed 8.0% (34 CFR Part 76.564).

23. Will you clarify that you can only have 3 pages for the budget/narrative?

The budget pages (Forms A, B, and C) should be completed in their entirety. Please provide all requested information on the budget forms. There are no page limits for budget completion.

24. Is there a percentage we should budget for equipment?

No. The data and identified needs in your proposal should determine the amount of monies spent on equipment from the budget.

25. Can you buy equipment in year 3?

Yes. However, we recommend that all equipment for your program be purchased in years 1 and 2.

26. Does the 21st CCLC revised 3-year award include a 20% match for year 3?

No. There is no matching requirement for Year 3 or any time during the grant period.

27. Where do proposals typically lose points (those simple mistakes that could have been avoided)?

Points are typically deducted when the applicant does not completely follow instructions and/or appropriately respond to the questions asked.

28. If our district does not have a CSI or TSI school, should we even write a project? All interested parties are encouraged to apply for the 21st CCLC grant. Remember, absolute priority is given to programs that serve students in low-performing schools. Competitive priority points are available to programs that serve CSI TSI and ATSI schools.

29. Should Budget on Form C be detailed and narrative?

Budget Form C should include figures and a narrative description of all line items found on the form.

30. Do you have to consult with private school even if they declined Title I & II services?

Yes. All applicants must conduct private school consultation with the Title IV, Part B-21st Century Community Learning Centers grant.

31. Is there carryover?

No. There are no carryover funds with 21st CCLC. Please see page 19 of the STEAM RFP.

32. Do you provide separate budget breakdown for co-applicant and partner?

No. There is only one budget for a single project. The fiscal agent is responsible for the administration of the grant from initial award to grant closeout.

33. If we are applying jointly/collaboratively with another eligible organization should we indicate that we are a consortium or individual applicant on the cover page?

Yes. Please refer to Form 1 (Cover Page) on page 63 of the STEAM RFP. There is a section on Form 1 for you to indicate whether your proposal is an individual grant or a consortium grant.

34. What is the difference between a partner and a consortium?

A partner is viewed as an entity that provides services and resources to support program operation. A consortium is viewed as co-applicant organizations having substantial roles in the delivery of program implementation. Each co-applicant is actively involved in program planning and design, share grant resources, make joint decisions, and have ongoing, significant involvement in the management and oversight of the program.

35. What are the measures of effectiveness?

Measures of Effectiveness refer to factors that assess student success as noted in Title IV-B, Section 4205 of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). All grant programs and activities shall be based upon:

- an assessment of objective data regarding the need for the 21st CCLC programs and activities in the schools and communities;
- an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic achievement opportunities; and
- evidence-based research that the 21st CCLC program or activities will help students meet the challenging State academic standards.

All evaluations of 21st CCLC programs must be based on these factors.

36. There is no match funding required (in-kind or actual match), just sustainability for the reduction percentage each year, correct?

Yes, there is no match funding required for the grant. However, a detailed sustainability plan should be submitted within the proposal.

37. Am I supposed to type anything ...maybe “see Budget Overview (Form A), Budget Narrative (Form B)” or am I supposed to retype a summary of the information that is found on Forms A, B, and C.

Please refer to the Instructions for Budget Forms on page 80 of the RFP. Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are found in this section of the RFP.

38. Should REQUIRED ELEMENTS be submitted in this order?

Yes. Please submit information in the order as requested on the Required Elements Checklist on page 47 of the RFP.

39. What should be page number 1 of my 15-page narrative? What should page 15 be?

Applicants are limited to 15 pages of narrative. The narrative portions of the application begin with the abstract, include the needs assessment, program plan and implementation, and conclude with the evaluation plan.

40. Are all the budget forms A, B, and C included in the maximum allowed 15 pages?

No, the budget pages are not included in the 15 pages of narrative.

41. Are private schools that participate subject to the focus presented by the host LEA?

Yes. Private schools that elect to participate in public LEAs' 21st CCLC programs are required to adhere to the program goals and activities as stated in the MDE-approved proposal.

42. May non-certified employees be paid overtime wages with 21st CCLC funds?

The 21st CCLC program is not regarded as a full-time program. Therefore, no overtime wages should be paid with 21st CCLC funds.

43. Should the evaluator be specifically identified in the proposal?

It is not required to identify the actual program evaluator in the proposal, but please account for the position in your budget.

44. For consortium, do you have one fiscal agent?

There is only one fiscal agent for all grantees—single entities or consortia.

45. Does the information in charts also have to be double-spaced and comply with font requirements as well?

The font size is a recommendation. Applicants are free to format the charts to include all necessary information.

46. Does the indirect cost have to be factored in the 20% Administration allocation?

Yes. The indirect costs of the program should be factored in the 20% of the administrative allocation.

47. Is it allowable for a nonprofit agency to use the US Department of Labor's guidance for indirect cost calculation?

Non-LEA subgrantees should use a restricted indirect cost rate not to exceed 8.0% (34 CFR Part 76.564).

48. How much funding is available this grant year? Is this a 3-year grant or a 5-year grant?

There is approximately \$5 million available for STEAM grants. Individual grants awards range from \$50,000-\$250,000 this award year. It is a 3-year grant.

49. What is the maximum that can be spent for the external evaluator?
Three percent (3%) of the annual budget is the maximum amount that can be spent on the external evaluator.
50. Will appendix pages be accepted?
Yes. Please label the appendix pages accordingly.
51. Will an application move to Phase 2 if we use a little smaller font (1.5" spacing and margins less than one inch) based on the 15-page limit?
Yes. The font size and margin sizes were strong recommendations for the easy readability of the proposals by the peer reviewers. Applications will not be penalized if they are not double-spaced or if the margin size is not one inch as recommended.
52. If you already have a grant and have one more year, can I apply?
Yes. Current grantees may apply if the applicant is in good standing and propose to serve a different population of students.
53. How do we locate a professional evaluator?
The MDE will provide training, a logic model, and an evaluation matrix to assist in the grantees' efforts in locating a professional evaluator.
54. Does MDE give preference to multi-site proposals over single-site proposals?
No. There is no preference regarding the number of sites within proposals.
55. Will priority points be awarded to schools in counties if the existing 21st CCLC in the county does not serve the school or district?
No. Priority points will be awarded to programs proposing to serve students in a county that is not currently being served by 21st CCLC programs.
56. Can any percentage of the funds be used for programs during the school day?
Please discuss the use of funds during the school day.
Applicants can use 21st CCLC funds to conduct expanded learning programs that provide students at least 300 additional program hours before, during, or after the traditional school day. 21st CCLC programs may operate during traditional school day hours outside of state-mandated instructional time.
57. In year 1, is the year of the program operation based on a calendar year, school year or what? What are the dates of years 2 and 3? Need clarity on the years.
Proposed grant period
Year 1: May 2019— June 30, 2020 (actual program operation)
Year 2: July 1, 2020— June 30, 2021 (actual program operation)
Year 3: July 1, 2021— June 30, 2022 (actual program operation)
Funds must be liquidated by September 30th of each program year.

58. What are the qualifications of a district to receive grant funds?
Any public or private organization is eligible to apply for a 21st CCLC grant. The organization must have an active and unrestricted DUNS number, must be in good standing with the Mississippi Department of Education, and have an MDE board-approved proposal.
59. We are in our last year of our grant. In order to qualify for a FY19 grant, would the program have to be different than the program we currently have?
Yes. The program will have to target a different population of students.
60. Is it mandatory to have 2 schools or can you focus on just one school?
The applicant can choose to serve only one school with 21st CCLC grant funds.
61. Can assistant principals serve as site coordinators?
Yes. Assistant principals can serve as site coordinators for 21st CCLC programs.
62. Must partners contribute financially or through services?
Partners may contribute monies, services, or tangible materials/goods to the 21st CCLC program.
63. Do we have to partner with an LEA?
Yes. All 21st CCLC programs must partner with a school or school district.
64. Do you need the superintendent signature if the proposed site is not located at a school?
Yes. The superintendent's signature acknowledges the school district's participation in the 21st CCLC program.
65. Is a partnership or at least an attempt at a partnership with a private school mandatory?
Yes. It is important to remember public schools are required to provide services to eligible students who attend non-public/private schools in the local attendance area. Therefore, the non-public/private schools should be invited to participate in the services of the proposed program through consultation.