



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Darren Reisberg
Chair of the Board

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

Frequently Asked Questions for Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers COVID Resources Last Updated: August 10, 2020

The vast impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the educational landscape in Illinois began March 17, 2020, with the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction.

On May 5, 2020, Governor JB Pritzker announced the Restore Illinois plan, which lays out a public health approach to safely reopen our state. Executive Order 2020-40, filed on June 4, 2020, allowed schools to reopen for in-person instruction, including before and after school programs, in Phase 3. In-person instruction is strongly encouraged in Phase 4; however, it is critical to note that this does not signify a return to pre-pandemic operations. Appropriate social distancing, face coverings, enhanced sanitation measures, and other accommodations will be necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and their families. Additionally, 21st CCLC programs should prepare for a return to remote programming in the event of an outbreak in a school building or a second wave of the virus in the Fall.

During Phase 4, IDPH guidelines for Illinois schools, including before and after school programs, will:

- Require use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings;
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space;
- Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible;
- Require that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings; and
- Require an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection.

All public and nonpublic schools in Illinois serving prekindergarten through 12th grade students must follow these guidelines. These guidelines also apply to the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). 21st CCLC programs located in school buildings should work closely with school administrators to ensure programming aligns with IDPH safety guidelines.

It is important to note that these requirements are subject to change pursuant to updated public health guidance and changing public health conditions. School leaders should remain alert for any updates.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a supplemental resource to 21st CCLC programs during the preparation for, and transition to, return to in-person instruction. While the topics herein are presented for consideration during preparation for return to in-person instruction, determinations by districts and 21st CCLC programs must be in accordance with the framework of the Office of Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

21st CCLC program grantees have always been critical links between schools, students, families and communities. Programs offered by 21st CCLC grantees can be an important component to continuing to

support students during this time of uncertainty. However, given the current public health emergency, it is likely that delivery of program activities will be impacted. ISBE will make reasonable and fair accommodations to expected results within the 21st CCLC program goals due to the ordered school closure.

The information in this document is intended to help inform the actions of 21st CCLC program providers during this period. As further guidance is received from our federal partners and other State agencies, we will update accordingly. Please refer to the Illinois State Board of Education website (www.isbe.net) or email 21stcclc@isbe.net for up-to-date information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Which 21st CCLC program activities can occur during Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan?

Activities must be in support of program goals and directly related to program effectiveness and student achievement. 21st CCLC programs must follow the IDPH safety requirements included in the Part 3 Transition Guidance *Starting the 2020-2021 School Year*. 21st CCLC programs should prepare for a return to remote programming in the event of an outbreak in a school building or a second wave of the virus in the Fall.

2. Which 21st CCLC program activities can continue during each Phase of the Restore Illinois Plan?

Activities must be in support of program goals and directly related to program effectiveness and student achievement. Examples of activities include:

- Academic support for students through remote/off-site learning opportunities (tutoring online) utilizing platforms to which students have access.
- Online or other remotely delivered programming for youth may be reasonable and necessary. If virtual programming is not an option, an attempt can be made to provide other activities and physical learning supplements to students.
- School collaboration efforts (such as evidence-based reading and math support, data collection, planning, and review).
- Fiscal Year 2021 21st CCLC program preparation.
- Virtual staff meetings (such as conference calls, Skype, etc.).
- Student and family education, social-emotional support, and engagement as it relates to your existing grant.
- Curriculum work that is specific to the 21st CCLC program.
- 21st CCLC program data collection, entry, and validation (21APR, Data Warehouse and Benchmarking Tool, Monitoring).
- Online professional development for staff.
- Online programming for students that is within the scope of your existing grant.
- Other expectations and associated job tasks listed in staff job descriptions that are reasonable and necessary.
- Gathering virtual and off-site student materials and information to support families.
- Conversion of 21st CCLC activities to a virtual format.
- Conducting the local evaluation.
- Administrative costs associated with programs (for example, processing expenditure reports, budget amendments, payroll and budget operations).

3. What factors should grantees consider when making decisions about program activities involving students?

Grantees should work cooperatively with schools to determine what activities are in the best interests of the students to be served. Grantees and schools may consider posing the following questions in the identification of such activities:

- Is the activity essential? Will the activity build the skills of family members to support the student's learning experience? Does the activity support the plans established by the school district?
- Can the activity be done virtually?
- Are the health and safety of the students and staff in the implementation of the activity following state and federal public health guidelines?
- Is the activity within the scope of the grantee's existing 21st CCLC grant?

Consultation with the local health department and school officials is encouraged.

4. What implementation steps should grantees consider when executing any of the above activities?

Grantees should consider the following:

- Maintaining records of daily hours and general work type during the ordered school-building closure period.
- Tracking lost program time, lower attendance results, lower expenditure patterns and/or other outcome data as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program local evaluation.
- Continuing to meet federal supplement, not supplant, requirements.
- Proceeding with program and budget revisions/amendments as necessary, including as needed to support the purchase of appropriate online learning tools for purposes of supporting students and families enrolled in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs.

5. Do programs need to keep or restrict services to normal program hours or hours outside of regular school day hours during this time?

This will depend on the plan developed at the local level. 21st CCLC funds are considered supplemental, meaning they should be used to supplement the regular school day. At this time, the regular school day would be defined by your district's plan. 21st CCLC services should complement, not overlap, these plans and learning time.

6. Are 21st CCLC grantees able to carryover unexpended FY 20 funds?

FY 20 21st CCLC recipients are permitted to carryover any FY20 unexpended funds which will be added to your FY21 allocation. Please note that this carryover allowance is for one year only. Grantees are encouraged to operate and expend their FY20 awards to the greatest extent possible. Upon receipt of the final FY 20 expenditure report, ISBE will add the FY20 unexpended amounts to the FY21 allocations. You will be notified by your program consultant when funds are added. At that time, upward amendments will be required to access the increased allocations. If you should have further questions, please direct them to your 21st CCLC program consultant

7. Should 21st CCLC grantees continue to pay individuals using grant funds during Restore Illinois Phases?

Yes, if an individual is funded in whole or in part with grant funds during the school year, the employee should be paid. ISBE will allow grantees to continue to charge salaries and benefits to currently active awards consistent with the recipient's policy of paying salaries from all funding sources, including Federal.

Employees supported with grant funds who are intended to provide direct services to students may continue to work during the period of a COVID19 outbreak using alternative methods. Examples of appropriate alternative methods may include telephone, videophone, and e-mail.

Grantees must maintain appropriate records and cost documentation for all costs charged to grants.

8. Are 21st CCLC grantees able to continue to pay contractors during Restore Illinois Phases?

It is recommended that grantees review the scope, pay structure and deliverables of all contracts for necessary modifications, amendments, or cancellation.

ISBE and the Governor's Office urges all employers to continue paying third-party contract employees. Funding is continuing to flow uninterrupted, so paying all employees, including third-party contract employees, is possible.

9. As a result of COVID, have there been any changes federal and state reporting requirements for the 21st CCLC grant?

As of now, the US Department of Education has not waived federal reporting requirements for 21st CCLC grantees. All grantees should be prepared to submit data for the Data Warehouse and Benchmarking Tool, 21APR, and prepare your local evaluation. As further guidance is received from the US Department of Education, we will update this requirement accordingly.

10. As program services continue are 21st CCLC grantees exempt from meeting days of operation and attendance requirements for the school year? How should attendance and participation be collected?

Programs will be able to continue to provide meaningful learning experiences that complement the school site's plan and seek to maintain relationships between the program, school, students and families during this period of school building closures. The means of delivery for these offerings will look very different in each community, as will the available data points for participation. We ask that grantees make a consistent effort to record reasonable and available data to indicate participation in their offerings. This could be a count of materials sent home, students logging in to virtual sessions or a number of other indicators that may be specific to your program's unique method of service delivery. Any updated information from the US Department of Education will be provided to grantees via the list serve.

11. Will the required monitoring process for 21st CCLC programs continue through each phase?

Yes, grantees may be requested to participate in a virtual visit with their principal consultant. Biannual calls will still occur.

