## Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Fiscal Year 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity/Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

## **Updates**

## 10/10/2025

• The CPS Protocols for submitting a FY 2026 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC application with CPS Schools have been added to the webpage.

## 10/15/2025

- Page 43 of the NOFO/RFP has been updated to correct the number of points an applicant must receive to be eligible for Priority Points.
- Question: Who will be contacted by ISBE about the status of our application?
   Answer: ISBE will contact the Authorized Representative as identified on Attachment 1 of the NOFO/RFP.
- 2. Question: Page 37 of the RFP states: "Proposals must receive 111 points from Sections 1-6 of the Evaluation Rubric to be eligible for priority points." However, page 43 of the RFP states: "Only applications that receive a base score of 108 or higher from Sections 1-6 of the Evaluation Rubric will be eligible for Priority Points." Just to confirm, are proposals required to receive a base score of at least 108 or 111 points to be eligible to receive Priority Points?

**Answer:** Page 43 of the NOFO/RFP has been updated to correct the number of points an applicant must receive to be eligible for Priority Points. According to the NOFO/RFP, an applicant must receive 111 points to be eligible for Priority Points.

- 3. Question: Is the NOFO stating that the applicant is required to have an RCDT code, or that the code for that district for which the applicant is partnering with, is required?
  Answer: According to page 2 of the NOFO/RFP, "Applicants will need to use their Region, County, District, Type (RCDT) code when applying."
- 4. Question: I would like to inquire about the eligibility to submit a proposal for an existing three-year 21st CCLC project that is currently being funded and will end August 2026. My online search provided some insight, but I am seeking knowledge about the following information:

21st CCLC 1 October 29, 2025

Existing 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grantees can apply for new funding, but generally cannot propose to serve a school that is already receiving services under a current 21st CCLC grant. The information further explains that current grantees are eligible to RE-APPLY with new schools. However, I don't know if schools that are currently receiving services for a project are eligible to submit a proposal in this round for the same schools. I understood that to continue these services, a new NOFO announcement would be required to cover the grant after the project term has ended. Would you please provide clarification about this type of submission, as there is no guidance for a three-year grant. Information is only available for a five-year grant, which would not apply in this instance.

**Answer:** According to page 3 of the NOFO/RFP, "An applicant cannot propose to serve any school or other entity that will be receiving services during FY 2026 under a 21st CCLC grant."

- 5. **Question:** In order to receive priority points for serving an eligible middle school, does the school partner have to serve ONLY middle school grades, or can the school contain those grades and ALSO contain younger grades?
  - **Answer:** As long as at least one proposed school is an eligible middle school or high school, and all other requirements for these priority points are met, the priority points will be awarded.
- 6. **Question:** Does CPS District 299 qualify as a "Tier 1 or Tier 2 School District Not Served"? **Answer:** According to Page 2 of the NOFO/RFP, Tier 1 or Tier 2 School Districts Not Served and Joint Applications: These are programs between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I Part A and at least one public or private community organization serving schools from Tier 1 or Tier 2 districts identified as not having been funded in Cohorts 22 or 25. This status is determined by Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) for FY 2025. See the ISBE <u>Evidence-Based</u> Funding Distribution Calculation webpage.
- 7. **Question:** Will we need to submit principal letters and sustainability charts for the proposed sites to be served?

Answer: Page 20 of the NOFO/RFP states: "The MOU must be established and signed by the LEA superintendent, the principal at each school to be served by the grant, and any other organization included as a co-applicant." Page 20 of the NOFO/RFP also states: Applicants are required to submit a program sustainability plan that describes how the 21st CCLC program will be continued after the grant funding has ended. Attachment 13R is provided for the submission of the sustainability plan."

- 8. **Question:** Are grantees expected to spend down a full year of funding from March to June 2026? If not, will it be possible to rollover unspent funds or receive a budget extension? **Answer:** According to page 6 of the NOFO/RFP, the grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2025. Awarded applicants will have the opportunity to back date spending to July 1, 2025, for FY 26. ISBE has not made any statements on the status or allowability to carry over funding for this grant.
- 9. **Question:** We would like to begin working on a new award application for the FY26 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC RFP. When logging in and selecting the correct system, I am not seeing the FY26 cohort application available. Can we please be provided with guidance on how to correct this?

**Answer:** To begin working on a new award application, please see the RFP and the RFP attachments.

10. Question: I was just informed that the District cannot include any schools that are in its final year of funding. Including them in the new 21st Century Community Learning Center program application would reportedly disqualify the District's grant application. Can you please confirm if this is accurate?

**Answer:** According to page 3 of the NOFO/RFP, "An applicant cannot propose to serve any school or other entity that will be receiving services during FY 2026 under a 21st CCLC grant."

11. **Question**: We operate a few of our after-school sites at non-school locations, we have some stand alone Clubhouses that students. Students are picked up from multiple schools and brought to this facility. Are we able to apply for a location that is not a school? If so, would we need to include all schools that are rolled into this location, or can we pick a few?

**Answer:** According to page 5 of the NOFO/RFP, "A site is defined as the physical location where grant-funded services and activities are provided to participating students and adults." Please see Attachment 4 of the RFP, which requests that you provide the name of the facility along with a list of all schools whose students will be served at this site.

12. **Question:** Just want to confirm that we can use column L "Eligibility Percent" from the ISBE Child Nutrition data in place of the Illinois Report Card data, and that it just needs to be above 40% for either data source.

**Answer:** According to page 3 of the NOFO/RFP, "Applications proposing services to schools with less than 40 percent low-income students as reported on the 2023-24 Illinois

Report Card will not be considered" and "Note: Elementary schools also may use the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals to calculate the low-income count. The free and reduced-price count generated at a middle or high school or from the elementary schools that feed into the middle and/or high schools may be used to establish the low-income count at the receiving middle or high school. Data is readily available on the ISBE Child Nutrition and Data Analytics and Mapping Tools webpage. Please use the FY 2025 results."

13. **Question:** Could you please send me the link to the grant attachments? The version available on the ISBE website isn't allowing me to save.

**Answer:** Please see the following <u>link</u> to the grant attachments.

14. **Question:** Can you please provide additional clarity to Question #10 above? **Answer:** Question 10 reads:

**Question:** I was just informed that the District cannot include any schools that are in its final year of funding. Including them in the new 21st Century Community Learning Center program application would reportedly disqualify the District's grant application. Can you please confirm if this is accurate?

**Answer:** According to page 3 of the NOFO/RFP, "An applicant cannot propose to serve any school or other entity that will be receiving services during FY 2026 under a 21st CCLC grant."

**Additional Clarification:** 21st CCLC Grant Cohorts FY 2022 and FY 2025 are currently active grants. Any schools being served by grants in those cohorts may not be included in schools proposed to be served by an FY 2026 21st CCLC grant.

15. **Question**: Do we need to have principal and partner letters of support for the RFP, including letters of intent to assist sustaining the grant?

**Answer:** Letters of support are not necessary for this RFP. Please see information on pages 12, 20, 36, and attachments 14, and 14A of the NOFO/RFP about MOUs.

16. **Question:** I am on the grants team, and we were wondering if we could apply for sites that already receive funding from other state agencies (such as IDHS)? The 21CCLC funds would supplement and not supplant existing state funding.

**Answer:** According to page 3 of the NOFO/RFP, "An applicant cannot propose to serve any school or other entity that will be receiving services during FY 2026 under a 21st CCLC grant." Please see pages 9 and 19-20 of the NOFO/RFP where partnerships with other federal, state, or local organizations are discussed.

21st CCLC 4 October 29, 2025

17. **Question:** Student attendance requirements: Wanted to confirm the requirement. Do we need to provide every student we propose to serve 12 hours of programming each for 28 weeks? If I am understanding that correctly, we would get to the minimum of 45 hours in 4 weeks (12 hours per week per student \* 4 weeks = 48 hours). Can you please clarify?

Answer: According to page 15 of the NOFO/RFP, "Students will need to attend 46 hours or more during the program year to be considered regular attendees. ISBE expects 80 percent or more of students served to be regular attendees." "21st CCLC programs funded under this NOFO/RFP, however, must operate a minimum of 12 hours a week for a minimum of 28 weeks per year."

18. **Question:** Definition of "sites": I work with a community organization that will partner with 2-3 schools to serve students both at the CBO's organization and at their schools. How many sites would this count as? Was initially assuming we would have three sites because we are serving students from three schools but wasn't sure that was correct. This information will guide our budget ask.

**Answer:** According to page 5 of the NOFO/RFP, "A site is defined as the physical location where grant-funded services and activities are provided to participating students and adults." Please see Attachment 4 of the RFP, which requests that you provide the name of the facility along with a list of all schools whose students will be served at this site.

19. **Question**: Is it possible to submit the application for the RCDT code noting the UEID as pending so that we can get the process started?

**Answer:** According to page 5 of the NOFO/RFP, "An entity that submits an application prior to obtaining an RCDT code is ineligible."

20. **Question:** Is this grant opportunity 3 or 5 years?

**Answer:** According to page 6 of the NOFO/RFP, "The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2025, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2026, or Aug. 31, 2026, for grantees who propose and are approved to provide extended year programming. Successful applicants may reapply via continuing application for up to two additional year(s)."

21. **Question:** I see the application for FY26 is open. Is that the cohort I want to apply for or do I need to wait until next year for FY27? Or, is it dependent on which schools we serve under each grant.

**Answer:** Page 3 of the NOFO/RFP states, "An applicant cannot propose to serve any school or other entity that will be receiving services during FY 2026 under a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant."

22. **Question:** We have finalized our proposal and are ready to submit the required PDF package ahead of the deadline. However, when logged into our main account, the "ISBE Attachment Manager" feature or link does not appear under our available applications or tools. Is there a specific permission or profile setup we are missing that enables the Attachment Manager?

**Answer:** To submit an application via Attachment Manager, please go to <u>isbe.net</u> and in the upper lefthand corner, click on the *System Quick Links*. From there you will select, *Send ISBE a File*. The direct link can also be found <u>here</u>. Please see page 6 of the NOFO/RFP for more information about submitting an application.

23. **Question**: Our organization is considering submitting a joint application with our affiliated school. At the same time, we are exploring a partnership with a Community Based Organization (CBO) which plans to submit its own 21st Century grant application. I wanted to confirm whether we may submit a joint application with the LEA serving the upper elementary, while also serving as a beneficiary and partner under the CBO's separate application with the LEA's lower elementary.

**Answer:** Page 3 of the NOFO/RFP states: "Applicants may submit multiple proposals ... [but] will be restricted to receiving a maximum of three funded grants." This maximum applies to entities that apply as the primary applicant, i.e. it is permissible that an entity may be awarded three grants as the primary applicant while still serving as a coapplicant on other awarded grants, provided there is no overlap of schools being served among those various grants.