



# Funding Note: Opportunities to Coordinate 21st Community Learning Centers Funding with the Child Care and Development Fund

## January 2011

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) administered by the Office of Child Care, Administration on Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), U.S. Department of Education, are two of the largest federal funding streams that support access to high quality school-age programs. Both federal programs have a common goal – to support safe places for school-age children to spend time before and after school and during the summer months. However, they differ in how funds are distributed, eligibility requirements, and how funds can be used. This funding note provides State child care administrators and other school-age stakeholders with an overview of the 21st CCLC program, and highlights potential areas for coordination with CCDF.

CCDF provides the largest federal investment in school-age programs, distributing \$7 billion to States, Territories, and Tribes in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, including \$2 billion provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Funds support child care subsidies for children from low-income families, ages birth through 12; and over 40 percent of children served are age five or older. The 21st CCLC, a \$.1.2 billion program, provides grants to States to fund after school, before school and summer programming to nearly 1.5 million children in almost nine thousand sites nationally.<sup>1</sup>

The table below provides a side-by-side comparison of the key elements of these two federal programs.

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<sup>1</sup> 21st CCLC Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS).

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/performance.html>. Retrieved December 24, 2009.

	<b>21st Century Community Learning</b>	<b>Child Care and Development Fund</b>
<b>Flow of Funds</b>	Federal formula grants to States, who distribute funds to schools, community-based and/or faith-based organizations through a competitive grant process.	Federal block grant to States and Territories for subsidy program for low-income parents. Targeted dollars for quality, infant-toddler, and school-age and resource & referral.
<b>Program Requirements</b>	Programs must provide academic enrichment in the areas of math and literacy; and meet the relevant safety and licensing requirements.	Programs must meet State health and safety licensing requirements.
<b>Goal of Program</b>	Supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment during non-school hours for students that attend high-poverty schools.	Program provides care to children while parents are working or in training.
<b>Program Administration</b>	U.S. Department of Education.	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
<b>Funding Amounts to States</b>	In FY 2008, \$1.08 billion total awards to 52 grantees; range of awards was \$5.29 million to \$131 million. <sup>2</sup>	In FY 2009, \$2.06 billion plus \$1.2 billion in ARRA funding. Range of awards for States was \$8.38 million - \$530 million.

## BACKGROUND ON 21st CCLC

The 21st CCLC program recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The program began as a discretionary grant program in the 1990's, and was converted to a State formula grant program with the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. As part of NCLB, Congress gave the program a clear charge to provide support to students struggling to meet performance standards in their schools. Programs funded through this program must serve children in underperforming and low-income schools and must provide additional academic support in literacy, math and science.

### State Implementation

The 21st CCLC grant is a State-administered formula grant program. States receive an annual allocation through a formula which considers the number of children eligible for Title I services in their State each year, with a minimum allocation for States with fewer school-age children. States distribute funds through a competitive process to eligible entities which include local educational agencies, charter schools, private organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations.<sup>3</sup> Grants may last three to five years and must be for a minimum of

<sup>2</sup> 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Funding Status. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stccclc/funding.html>. Retrieved July 28, 2010.

\$50,000 each year. There is no maximum grant amount.

Each State may reserve up to two percent of its annual funding to pay administrative costs associated with the grant, typically to cover the costs of grant competitions and program monitoring. A State may reserve up to three percent of its annual allocation to fund activities that improve the quality of 21st CCLC programs. Typically States use these funds to offer an annual grantee conference, monitor grantee activities, and provide professional development opportunities and workshops.

Since each State has significant flexibility with these funds, several States have aligned this grant with State education priorities or afterschool quality improvement efforts.

- In **California**, the 21st CCLC funds served as an impetus for the State legislature to allocate funds for Afterschool Education and Safety (ASES) grants targeted to middle school students. Using ASES funds and 21st CCLC funds, the State has created a well-defined regional network of professional development providers to support grantees.
- In **Minnesota**, the grant is administered by an office at the State Education Agency that provides assistance and support in youth development initiatives, so the grant RFP requests that applicants provide a strong youth development component in their programs.
- Both **Maryland** and **New Hampshire** ask grantees to make service-learning activities a key feature of their programs.
- **Michigan** and **Massachusetts** have developed strong State and local program evaluation systems and offer professional development opportunities targeted to areas of need identified through these assessments.

#### Federal Set Aside Funds

Like the States, the federal government has the ability to set aside funds to improve program quality nationally. Each year the U.S. Department of Education (ED) funds “National Activities” to improve the knowledge and practice of quality afterschool programs. In the past several years, ED disseminated promising practices and data about the 21st CCLC program. Links to resources developed by ED can be accessed at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/resources.html>.

- A national **annual performance reporting database**, the Program and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS), has a public website that provides links to summary annual reports and key data such as amounts of grants, number of children served, key grant activities, grant partners, and grantee objectives, disaggregated at the national, State, grantee, and site level. The database also has reporting features

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<sup>3</sup> For a list of current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees, visit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/grantees.html>.

available for use by grantees and State administrators that provide more detailed information on grantee and site performance. PPICS is accessible at:

<http://ppics.learningpt.org/PPICSNet/public/Default.aspx>

- An **impact study**, The Evaluation of Enhanced Academic Instruction in After-School Programs, examined the benefit of participating in either a reading or math program as part of an afterschool program. Students in selected programs were assigned by lottery to enhanced programs using commercially available math or reading curriculum. The study's final report is available at:

<http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=NCEE20094077>

The U.S. Department of Education monitors the implementation of the grant program at the State level. Federal staff offer assistance in the interpretation of the Act for State staff and grantees, conduct on-site audits of State implementation of the Act, and disseminate non-regulatory guidance to assist States and grantees in the development of high-quality programs.

### **State Opportunities to Coordinate 21CCLC and CCDF**

State leaders continue to explore strategies for coordinated use of CCDF and 21st CCLC funding streams at the program and State level.<sup>4</sup> Several factors drive these efforts to coordinate and align CCDF and 21st CCLC funds. States are concerned about sustaining the programs funded by 21st CCLC dollars because these funds are generally intended to be a short-term source of funding for the startup or expansion of afterschool programs. States award grants for a period of three to five years, and while continuation grants can be made, many States will commit these funds to a particular program only once. Consequently, many programs that receive 21st CCLC funds must seek other resources to sustain programs long-term, and CCDF funds offer a potential source to diversify funding.

In addition, increasing children's access to quality programs and facilitating parental choice is a key focus of the CCDF program. Sustaining new afterschool programs, especially those in low-income neighborhoods, is a way to expand opportunities and choices for CCDF families. Coordination between the CCDF and 21st CCLC programs also holds the promise of improving program quality, as both programs offer resources for technical assistance and quality improvement.

Finally, in an era of tight budgets, many States are looking for ways to make better use of all resources in the system. A growing number of States are therefore undertaking initiatives to build a coordinated system of programs and supports for students during non-school hours. By coordinating and aligning the two largest funding sources, CCDF and 21CCLC, States are

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<sup>4</sup> For a further discussion of efforts for coordinating school-age and afterschool funding streams, see: CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC: State Efforts to Facilitate Coordination for Afterschool Programs, Afterschool Investments Project, October 2004. Available for download at: <http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/4656/pdf>.

finding ways to maximize and sustain supports and services to school-age children and their families.

### Challenges to Coordination

State and local leaders sometimes experience challenges to coordinating these two funding streams, due to different program goals, eligibility requirements, and administrative processes of each funding stream. In a recent focus group<sup>5</sup>, stakeholders from both programs identified the following challenges to effective coordination of the funding streams:

- **Funding streams are often administered by different State agencies.** This necessitates regular communication to coordinate policies and practices to ensure funding goals are aligned where possible. Even where CCDF and 21st CCLC are administered by the same agency, the programs are often in different programmatic divisions.
- **21st CCLC programs may not be licensed.** Programs often do not meet minimum hours of operation requirements to qualify for State child care licensing regulations, which is typically a requirement for receiving CCDF. In some States, school-based programs are regulated by the Department of Education and may be exempt from child care licensing requirements. In these cases, State education agencies and State CCDF administrators must work cooperatively to pursue legislative rulemaking or other policy strategies to allow school-based programs to receive child care subsidies.
- **A majority of 21st CCLC programs do not charge participation fees.** In fact, many programs prefer not to charge any fee for participation. While 21st CCLC programs may charge fees, typically on a sliding scale to ensure no child is turned away, focus group participants noted that in many programs and some States, there is a prevailing opinion that these programs should not charge participation fees. CCDF typically operates as a subsidy program to support low-income working parents, and parents pay co-pays based on their income. These differences in payment structures could create an administrative challenge for coordinating the two funding streams and serving families seamlessly.
- **Structural and philosophical differences between the two programs.** While parents must be working or attending training to qualify for CCDF subsidy programs, 21st CCLC programs can serve any child, with a priority towards serving children from low-income families. 21st CCLC programs must support school day learning, particularly in the areas of math, literacy and science. Programs receiving CCDF subsidies are not under obligation to meet any specific programmatic focus.

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<sup>5</sup> A focus group comprised of CCDF administrators, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC administrators, and State network staff was facilitated by The Finance Project at the Statewide Afterschool Network of Networks meeting, hosted by the C.S. Mott Foundation, in January, 2010.

### Promising Examples of Coordination

Despite some barriers and challenges, there are many examples of State level coordination of CCDF and 21st CCLC funds. States are actively engaged in improving the quality of school-age and out-of-school time programs using these two federal funding programs, often collaborating with key State partners. For example, CCDF Funds and 21st CCLC Funds have been used to:

- **Create Collaborative Development of Professional Development Systems.** In several States, notably Florida, New Hampshire, and Ohio, CCDF and 21st CCLC administrators have jointly funded the collaborative development of elements of professional development systems, such as core competencies for afterschool educators, program standards, and program assessments.
- **Ensure equitable access to programs.** In New York, the Division of Children and Family Services is working across agencies to review State and federal programs that support afterschool and summer learning activities to ensure broad geographic distribution of available funds and balanced access to programs.
- **Blend and braid funds.** In West Virginia, school-age care providers successfully support children in their programs using both CCDF and 21st CCLC funds.

In **Wayne County, West Virginia**, a private day care provider, Playmates Child Development Center, and the local board of education partnered to run multiple 21st CCLC sites, serving approximately 2,000 students. About 10% of the children enrolled in the program qualify for CCDF subsidies. In the partnership, the Board of Education provides facilities, transportation, teachers and leadership while Playmates provides facilities, teachers, transportation, oversight, leadership, planning, communication, and grant writing. Also, over 20 community partners including the local library and hospital contribute to the project. Jeanette Barker from Playmates shares, "Collaboration is always a challenge. The idea of blending, braiding, and understanding the value of multiple partners takes time to build a strong foundation. Our collaborative has worked together on several different projects that helped us with our project."

### Promising Examples of Improving Quality

States are actively engaged in improving the quality of school-age and out-of-school time programs using these two federal funding programs, often collaborating with key State partners. For example:

- In **Ohio**, CCDF and 21st CCLC quality set-aside funds supported the creation of Program Quality Guidelines.

- **Plus Time New Hampshire**, a statewide non-profit working to improve the quality of and access to afterschool programs in the state, partnered with the NH Department of Health and Human Services to develop Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals that support a Statewide Afterschool Professional Credential.
- The **Iowa Department of Education** supported the dissemination of Program Quality Guidelines developed by the Iowa Statewide Afterschool Network.

## CONCLUSION

This brief identifies opportunities to coordinate 21st CCLC and CCDF dollars to improve the quality of out-of-school time programs. While some States have succeeded in collaboratively funding programs with these federal funds, differing eligibility requirements and program cultures means that state and local leaders must work collaboratively to address coordination challenges. While funding levels and specific requirements of the 21st Century CCLC program are uncertain due to impending reauthorization, through communication about program goals and efforts to build relationships, States have the opportunity to collaborate for the benefit of school-age children and their families.

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