

Connecticut State Department of Education
COVID-19 Guidance for
21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Programs April 23, 2020

The following guidance was developed regarding use of 21st CCLC funds during school and program closures due to COVID-19. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) 21st CCLC program strongly recommends that 21st CCLC grantees continue to think creatively about how to support students during this unusual time. Research shows that children and youth who have a supportive, stable relationship with an adult are more resilient to stress and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. For many of the students engaged in 21st CCLC programs, seeing a familiar face virtually or hearing a familiar voice may be a powerful factor in their well-being socially and emotionally during this time. State and federal guidance both strongly recommended that school districts pay their employees during the current emergency school closure. Districts must be prepared to resume programming to students when schools re-open, and/or for the summer. In order to do that, they will need to have a prepared and available workforce. Please continue the great work each of you do to support our students and communities. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to 21st CCLC Program Coordinator, Shelby Pons at shelby.pons@ct.gov.

Provide Learning Opportunities for Students and Families

Our current priority is the health and safety of our staff, students, families and communities. While practicing social (physical) distancing and following the stay at home advisory, 21st CCLC programs are encouraged to provide appropriate enriching opportunities using online resources, platforms and/or other materials that support engagement and learning for students and families.

Remote Learning

You may use your current grant funds to deliver services at a distance during the period of program closure. When developing and implementing remote learning opportunities, programs must ensure equity in the support for all students to engage in meaningful and productive learning. While use of technology is one means of connecting with students, grantees should also consider ways to support students who may not have access to technology so they may continue to remain engaged offline. This may include providing grab and go materials such as art supplies; kits for hands-on projects; providing culturally and linguistically relevant books; scavenger hunts around their home or neighborhood (with the appropriate social/physical distancing); engineering design challenges; materials for letter writing or artistic creations for a family member, friend, medical professional/first responder, or an older adult in a nursing facility, etc.

Some examples of ways in which technology may be used during remote learning include group video sessions/calls, 1:1 phone or video calls, emailing project ideas, and other resources to effectively engage with students.

Provide Telework Opportunities for Full and Part-time Staff

We encourage 21st CCLC staff to be allowed to work remotely during COVID-19 related school/program closures. Please keep in mind that collaborative planning and virtual communication will be essential in implementing an effective interim remote working policy. 21st CCLC Coordinators and supervisors should have an ongoing understanding of what each member of your staff are working on during any

remote working hours that result from COVID-19 related school/program closures. In a continued effort to ensure that grant funds are being used appropriately, please also be aware that evidence of employee work during any such closures may be requested, at the Department's discretion.

Approved Tasks for Paid Staff

The following are examples of approved tasks that may be conducted remotely for staff to continue to receive pay – work conducted remotely must be specific to implementing and supporting 21st CCLC programs:

- Virtual staff meetings (conference calls, Zoom meetings, Skype, etc.)
- Providing supports to students/families with remote learning assignments
- Online professional development supported by the Department
- Curriculum/Lesson plan development
- Development of virtual programming and other types of remote learning opportunities
- Summer program planning
- Online professional development through the U.S. Department of Education's You 4 Youth Portal
- Program data analysis and other evaluation activities
- Supporting school/community grab and go meal sharing efforts for students and families
- Grant writing
- Wellness check-ins with students and families

Provision of Meals

Connecticut has received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow schools to continue providing meals to students during school closure. Federal 21st CCLC funds may not be used to cover food costs at this time. For more information you can visit <https://portal.ct.gov/sde>.