

Funding Options for Non-21CCLC Funded After-School Programs



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Partner Engagement: Forgo Relying on 21CCLC Funds

Even though partner engagement is still tied to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21CCLC), there are steps after-school programs can take to receive alternative funding options. The initial intent was that an after-school site would receive a 21st Century grant that's typically five years in length and start out with a larger dollar amount the first year. Then, each subsequent year that dollar amount that's being awarded drops off.

The original intent was that these after-school programs would form partnerships with community-based organizations and local businesses to help supplement the funding that they were receiving. At the end of the five years, they would have a self-sustaining after-school program that does not rely on 21CCLC funds.

That didn't come to fruition, but the concept is still there that these after-school programs should be reaching out to partners to engage with them. Similarly, if you're trying to form a partnership with a business to receive donations, having data to show your site's impact on the community can be beneficial when you're approaching different organizations to form a partnership.

Partnering with Community-Based Organizations

Some community-based organizations will run after-school programs by partnering with a local school district. For instance, approximately 30 after-school sites running in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) are operated by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

So, if you're a community-based organization, being able to go to a school district and say, "here's the impact that we're having on the students from your district," is powerful. If the after-school program can utilize data to show an improvement in students' test scores, it makes the school and district look good.

So, having evidence that shows your program's effectiveness is good for any after-school program, whether they're associated with the school district or a community-based organization that's serving kids from a school district. This is also useful for recruiting students. If you're trying to reach out to parents, you can say, "hey, kids who come to our program, their GPA goes up by 10%". Using data to showcase improvement could encourage parents to keep attending the after-school program if they're regular participants.

Supplemental Funding: Grant Applications

Aside from 21CCLC funding, there are other types of grants to support after-school programs. Some philanthropic organizations have grants that programs can submit applications to and receive additional funds.

When compiling a grant proposal, use solid data that shows, for example, a 15% increase in test scores for students that were served in a program for more than 20 days compared to the rest of the school population. This can effectively show the organization that you're submitting the application to, that you're taking this seriously and will use their funds properly.

Even if you're not a 21st Century-funded program, at a minimum, try to keep track of the following:

- Daily attendance
- Student demographic
- School grade level
- Race and ethnicity
- Gender

These are common data elements that funders like to see. For instance, how many students of Hispanic ethnicity were you serving? Additionally, many programs collect time-based data, so you'll need a timestamp; an hour and a minute associated with check-in and check-out times. This is something that the AS21 system can track and record for you.

