



Association of  
Science-Technology  
Centers

## STEM PUBLIC PROGRAMS: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers

*Volume 1, Issue 1*

*June 25, 2012*

*In an effort to make ASTC members more aware of some of the lesser-known programmatic and funding opportunities offered by a variety of sources – and available to science centers and museums – ASTC is launching “STEM Public Programs: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers,” a new series of electronic briefs where we’ll share details from meetings and conversations with key representatives from U.S. federal agencies and elsewhere. For today’s premiere edition, we spoke with officials responsible for the U.S. Department of Education’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program...*

The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program “supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.”

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, which received \$1.152 billion for Fiscal Year 2012 and would see the same amount in Fiscal Year 2013 under the President’s budget request, is offered through “formula grant” process. In short, this means that the Federal government distributes money to individual states based upon certain predetermined measures – and that the funding is not awarded to those states through a competitive process. The competition begins on the state level. There, State Education Agencies (SEAs) are charged with creating their own 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant criteria (based upon ED guidelines) and running competitions within the state to determine which applicants will receive sub-grants.

So, while only the SEAs themselves are eligible to receive 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds directly from ED, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), school districts, community-based organizations, public or private entities, and nonprofit organizations – and consortiums comprised of them – can apply to their individual states for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sub-grants. Awards range in scope from 3-5 years, and in funding amounts from the mid hundred thousands to, potentially, the lower millions.

Over the years, a number of science centers and museums have received sub-grants through the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, and ED encourages ASTC members to learn more about the way their state conducts the competition, and to consider the potential benefits of submitting an application. In fact, ASTC is delighted that program will be highlighted in a session, “STEM After School: A Partnership of the U.S. Department of Education and Science Centers,” at the upcoming 2012 ASTC Annual Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Attendees will learn about the importance of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative and program models and opportunities from a panel including an ED spokesperson (invited), representatives of two museums, and a researcher. For more details on – and to register for – the Annual Conference, visit: <http://conference.astc.org/>.

The Department of Education's website (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>) has detailed information on the program, including eligibility requirements, lists of previous awardees by state, frequently asked questions, and more. You'll likely find the "Contact" tab especially helpful - there, you'll find a list of State Department of Education contacts, websites, and application due dates (which vary by state). The ED representative with whom we spoke suggests reaching out to the contact from your state for answers to any questions you might have, as program details are unique to each one and they'll be best equipped provide helpful answers.

ASTC will keep you posted on further developments within the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program.