Tips for Forming a 21st CCLC Consortium

This document is developed by the Montana Afterschool Alliance to be informational only. It is not intended to supplant guidance from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), the administrator of 21st CCLC grants in Montana. Questions related to grant eligibility and application should be directed to OPI.

What is a Consortium?
A consortium is a group of two or more organizations who apply under one grant application with mutually agreed upon goals, objectives, budgets, and administration. At least one member of a consortium must be a school district. Additional members can be school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, non-profits, private schools or a combination of any of these.

A school district that has multiple schools operating as CCLCs is considered one entity. For a school district to apply as a consortium, they need to include at least one other school district and/or organization.

Why Form/Join a Consortium?
Consortium building can help make 21st CCLC funds accessible to programs that might otherwise not serve a large enough number of students to qualify for funding as a stand alone program receiving the minimum size grant.

Additionally, consortia can help programs to better serve a population through coordinated service delivery that can expand access and/or improve quality through strategies such as shared program materials or consolidating participants in order to offer summer programs.

Benefits of Consortium Participation
- Built-in colleague support
- Shared resources
  - Program materials
- Administrative efficiencies can free up more money for programming
  - Improve program salaries
  - Increase professional development
  - Improve quality of program

Forming a Consortium
Once interested parties decide they would like to partner in a consortium, there are some items that should be considered and agreed to. For a school/district, an agreement would need to be approved by the school board. For nonprofit organizations, approval would be needed from board of directors.
Consortia require separate agreements between the grantee and each partner/sub-grantee. An agreement allows the partners to clearly state the expectations of each party and the remedy for non-performance.

**Important items to consider:**

- Site Director/Grantee Designation
- Fund Distribution
  - Amount to each center
  - Amount for professional development & supplies
  - Administration
- Reporting Requirements - **within the consortium**
  - Requirements and calendar should correspond with grant reporting
  - Who does what?
  - Link to funding and continued consortium participation should be defined
- Center Coordinators and Staff
  - Who hires?
  - Who employs?
  - Who supervises?
- Term of Agreement
  - A consortium agreement should be for the life of the 21st CCLC grant.

**Considerations for the Grantee/Site Director**

**Fiscal Administration**
The fiscal agent is responsible for the disbursement of funds to the participating centers within the agreed upon timeframe. The 21st CCLC grant operates on a reimbursement basis to the grants. The consortium, too may be set-up on a reimbursement basis. The fiscal agent should have the financial capacity to both manage the funds and ensure that payments can be made in a timely fashion.

**Communications & Monitoring**
It is recommended for the site director to provide monitoring of each center to ensure they are in compliance with their grant application, meeting principles of effectiveness, using funds on allowable expenditures, monitoring progress toward application goals, and complying with all signed assurances. Additionally, the site director can help connect consortium personnel to professional development opportunities that are either required for the grant or help further the goals.

Communications should start in the grant-writing phase and include all partners in the development of goals and plans. Grant monitoring can happen a variety of ways.

**Examples of Monitoring Activities:**

- On-site monitoring visits
- One-on-one monitoring calls
- Conference calls with center coordinators
- Monthly fiscal oversight
- Participate in hiring center coordinator
- Maintain communication with partner schools/non-profit administration (ex. monthly report)
- Communication of statewide evaluation to personnel

**Reporting & Accountability**
The grantee/site director works with the partners to ensure all centers in their consortium are in compliance with the grant. The site director should also be in compliance with the grant. Consortium agreements can clearly define the remedy for centers whose participation hinders compliance with the grant.

**Considerations for a Center Coordinator**

**Program Operations**
The center coordinator/head teacher is responsible for the day to day operations of a 21st CCLC program.

**Program Goals**
The center coordinator is responsible for helping to define and execute the goals of their particular program, as identified in the logic model to be developed and reported on within the grant application.

**Data Collection/Reporting**
The center coordinator is responsible for the collection of their program’s student records, daily attendance and program information required for the grant. This information is then reported to the site director according to the schedule and terms identified in the consortium agreement.