Rubric of Scoring Criteria for Iowa Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Title IV, Part B) Grant Program

This resource serves as the rubric independent reviewers will use when scoring applications for the federal Title IV, Part B - Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program in Iowa. Additional information can be found at the Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers Resources or by contacting Joe Collins at 515-402-2729 or joe.collins@iowa.gov.

Scoring Sections (110 total points):

- Student Needs Assessment – 20 Points
- Project Plan – 30 Points
- Research Base – 5 Points
- Management & Sustainability Plan – 20 Points
- Communications Plan – 5 Points
- Partnerships Plan – 10 Points
- Evaluation Plan – 10 Points
- Budget Plan – 10 Points

*Note: An additional 10 points are awarded by Department staff based on an initial application review for compliance and assessment of risk. A total of 30 Competitive Priority Points are also available for applicants, but these must be explicitly requested with the Request for Competitive Priority form at the time of application. There are 6 competitive priority areas, which award 5 points each, if and when proven valid within the initial grant application process. This allows for the awarding of up to a maximum total of 150 points for qualifying applicants.

General Application Timeline:

- September - November 2026: The period to submit the required Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply opens on 09/01 and closes on 11/30.
- October - December 2026: The Request for Applications (RFA) period officially opens on 10/30 and closes on 12/31.
- January 2027: Applications reviewed by Department staff for compliance.
- January - February 2027: Grant reviewers read and score applications for funding.
- February 2027: Grant reviewers conference.
- April 2027: Grant awards announced.
- May - June 2027: Grant contracts finalized.
- July 1, 2027: Program implementation may begin immediately with summer programming or with the school year in August/September.

NOTE: TOTAL POINTS PER ITEM NUMBER

Student Needs Assessment (20 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-3 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	4-7 Points (Sufficient)	8-10 Points (Extensive/Strong)
2.1	The needs assessment provides no evidence of the student need for a before and/or after school program (may include weekends, holidays and summer), little evidence of the school and community resources* available, and little documentation of how the proposed program will address student needs (including needs of students with working families). The following required data is not included: Title programs data available from the Iowa Department of Education, and data describing achievement gaps. The needs assessment does not summarize the transportation, safety, and accessibility needs of students or parents. *Take into consideration that community resources may be limited in rural communities.*	The needs assessment provides minimal evidence that only minimally defines the student need for a before and/or after school program (may include weekends, holidays and summer), evaluates school and community resources* available, and documents how the proposed program will address student needs (including needs of students with working families). The following required data is included: Title programs data available from the Iowa Department of Education, and data describing achievement gaps. The needs assessment only minimally summarizes the transportation, safety, and accessibility needs of students and/or parents. *Take into consideration that community resources may be limited in rural communities.*	The needs assessment provides sufficient evidence utilizing objective data that sufficiently defines the student need for a before and/or after school program (may include weekends, holidays and summer), evaluates school and community resources* available and sufficiently documents how the proposed program will address student needs (including needs of students with working families). The following required data is included: Title programs data available from the Iowa Department of Education, and data describing achievement gaps. The needs assessment sufficiently summarizes the transportation, safety, and accessibility needs of students and parents. *Take into consideration that community resources may be limited in rural communities.*	The needs assessment provides extensive evidence utilizing objective data that very clearly defines the student need for a before and/or after school program (may include weekends, holidays and summer), evaluates school and community resources* available, and convincingly documents how the proposed program will address student needs (including needs of students with working families). The following required data is included: Title programs data available from the Iowa Department of Education, and data describing achievement gaps. The needs assessment strongly summarizes the transportation, safety, and accessibility needs of students and parents. *Take into consideration that community resources may be limited in rural communities.*
2.2	There is no evidence that external stakeholders, including youth, parents, community groups, and partners, were engaged in identifying needs and developing the program.	There is minimal evidence that a variety of stakeholders, including youth, parents, community groups, and partners, were engaged in identifying needs and developing the program.	There is sufficient evidence that a wide variety of stakeholders, including youth, parents, community groups, and partners, were engaged in identifying needs and developing the program.	There is extensive evidence that a wide variety of stakeholders, including youth, parents, community groups, and partners, were engaged in identifying needs and developing the program.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Project Plan (30 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
3.1	There is no evidence that the proposed academic, enrichment, and family literacy/engagement activities are linked to the student needs assessment described in the "Student Need" section. No curriculum listed proposed to meet student needs.	There is minimal evidence that the proposed academic, enrichment, and family literacy/engagement activities are linked to the student needs assessment described in the "Student Need" section. Vague description of curriculum.	There is sufficient evidence that the proposed academic, enrichment, and family literacy/engagement activities are linked to the student needs assessment described in the "Student Need" section. A good description of the curriculum is used to link student needs with academic goals.	There is extensive evidence that the proposed academic, enrichment, and family literacy/engagement activities are linked to the student needs assessment described in the "Student Need" section. An extensive description of the curriculum is used to link student needs with academic goals.
3.2	The application does not propose a variety of 1) academic, 2) enrichment, and 3) family literacy/engagement services that fit within the eligible federal activities listed in the RFA. The academic and enrichment activities do not appear to be of high quality and/or do not support outcomes in literacy and math. The application does not propose to provide any meal or snack.	The application proposes 1) academic, 2) enrichment, and 3) family literacy/engagement services that fit within the eligible federal activities listed in the RFA. Academic and enrichment activities support outcomes in literacy and math. The quality of programming and services could be improved. The application proposes to provide students with a meal and/or snack that does not meet USDA nutrition guidelines.	The application proposes high-quality 1) academic, 2) enrichment, and 3) family literacy/engagement services that fit within the eligible federal activities listed in the RFA. Academic and enrichment activities support outcomes in literacy and math. Variety could be expanded, but it is sufficient. The application proposes to provide students with only a snack that meets USDA nutrition guidelines every day of operation.	The application proposes an extensive variety of high-quality 1) academic, 2) enrichment, and 3) family literacy/engagement services that fit within the eligible federal activities listed in the RFA. Academic and enrichment activities support outcomes in literacy and math. The application proposes to provide students with a snack and a full meal that meet USDA nutrition guidelines every day of operation. This is a Best Practice of high-quality programs.
3.3	The application does not propose family literacy/engagement activities.	The application proposes family literacy/engagement activities, but they do not align with the needs assessment.	The application proposes family literacy/engagement activities that align with the needs assessment.	The application proposes family literacy/engagement activities that align with the needs assessment and are likely to have a significant impact on participating students' families or the students themselves.
3.4	Application does not provide goals and objectives for the activities. If offering summer programming, the program does not plan to operate for at least 30 days.	The application provides goals and objectives that are minimally logical, clear, and/or measurable for the activities proposed to meet student needs. If offering summer programming, the program operates for at least 30 days.	The application provides sufficiently logical, clear, and measurable goals and objectives for the activities proposed to meet student needs. If offering summer programming, the program operates for at least 30 days.	The application provides extensive, logical, clear, and measurable goals and objectives for the activities proposed to meet student needs. If offering summer programming, the program operates for more than 30 days to support data collection.

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
3.5	The application does not explain how programming will link to school day instruction.	The application minimally explains how programming will link to school-day instruction through relationships with school-day staff, alignment with state and national standards, or through the school's CSIP.	The application sufficiently explains how programming will link to school-day instruction through relationships with school-day staff, alignment with state and national standards, or through the school's CSIP.	The application extensively explains how programming will link to school-day instruction through relationships with school-day staff, alignment with state and national standards, or through the school's improvement plan.
3.6	The applicant has no experience in providing educational and/or enrichment and related activities to school-age children.	The applicant has minimal experience in providing educational and/or enrichment and related activities to school-age children.	The applicant has experience in providing educational and/or enrichment and related activities that will complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and positive youth development of school-age children.	The applicant has extensive experience in providing educational and/or enrichment and related activities that will complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and positive youth development of school-age children.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Research Base (5 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
4.1	The application provides no evidence of a research base for the proposed activities. There are no examples of how research will be implemented into the program.	The application provides minimal evidence of a research base for the proposed activities. Minimal examples of how research will be implemented into the program.	The application provides sufficient evidence of a strong research base for the proposed activities. Sufficient examples of how research will be implemented into the program. Citations (web, print) are provided.	The application provides extensive evidence from multiple sources of a strong research base for the proposed activities and extensive examples of how research will be implemented into the program. Extensive citations (web, print) are provided.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Management and Sustainability Plan (20 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
5.1	The application does not provide a plan to ensure effective staffing. Previous subgrantees do not provide documentation of a 5-year history with sustainability. Rural schools often staff programs internally and train individuals, rather than committing large amounts of time to outside organizations, due to a shortage of personnel in all organizations and agencies in rural communities. The program is charging fees for sustainability, which is not a best practice (see updated USDA 2023 guidance). *Reviewers should deduct points for applications that indicate they will charge fees.*	The application provides a minimally acceptable plan to ensure effective staffing. It includes few, if any, details specifically on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff, professional development, strong program leadership (including how leadership will maintain alignment with school day instruction), and the use of volunteers (specifically seniors) to support high-quality programming. Previous subgrantees provide minimal documentation of a 5-year history with sustainability. Rural schools often staff programs internally and train individuals, rather than committing large amounts of time to outside organizations, due to a shortage of personnel in all organizations and agencies in rural communities.	The application outlines a comprehensive plan to ensure effective staffing, including recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff, professional development, strong program leadership (with a focus on maintaining alignment with school day instruction), and the use of volunteers (specifically seniors) to support high-quality programming. Previous subgrantees must document a sufficient 5-year history with sustainability. Rural schools often staff programs internally and train individuals, rather than committing large amounts of time to outside organizations, due to a shortage of personnel in all organizations and agencies in rural communities.	The application outlines an extensive plan to ensure effective staffing, detailing recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff, professional development, strong program leadership (including alignment with school day instruction), and the use of volunteers (specifically seniors) to support high-quality programming. Previous subgrantees must document an extensive 5-year history with sustainability. Rural schools often staff programs internally and train individuals, rather than committing large amounts of time to outside organizations, due to a shortage of personnel in all organizations and agencies in rural communities.

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
5.2	The application does not provide a plan for student transportation or to ensure safe and accessible facilities and services. There is no plan for safe student transportation home after the program ends.	The application provides a minimal plan for safe student transportation to and from the program and home, where appropriate, but lacks detail on ensuring safe and accessible facilities and services. Take into consideration that transportation arrangements in rural communities may be unique. It is okay for programs to have parents pick up youth if they have extended hours. There is a minimal plan for the safe transportation of students.	The application provides sufficient detail of a plan for safe student transportation to and from the program and home, where appropriate. It also ensures safe and accessible facilities and services, including translation services, inclusive program facilities, and support for students with disabilities. Take into consideration that transportation arrangements in rural communities may be unique. It is okay for programs to have parents pick up youth if they have extended hours. There is a sufficient plan for safe student transportation.	The application outlines an extensive plan for safe student transportation to and from the program and home, where appropriate. It also ensures safe and accessible facilities and services, including translation services, inclusive program facilities, and support for students with disabilities. The application details how students will be safely transported to and from the program and home. The application details how the applicant will ensure that programming takes place in safe and accessible facilities. It is okay for programs to have parents pick up youth if they have extended hours. There is an excellent plan for safe student transportation.
5.3	The application does not provide a sustainability plan. No details about the organizational and/or program leadership structure or how it will develop and engage a stakeholder advisory group. Missing advisory group meeting schedule.	The application does provide a sustainability plan, but it offers minimal detail about the organizational and/or program leadership structure or how it will develop and engage a stakeholder advisory group. Unclear about the advisory group meeting schedule.	The application provides a sufficient sustainability plan that describes the organizational and/or program leadership structure and how it will develop and engage a stakeholder advisory group at least quarterly.	The application provides extensive details of the sustainability plan, outlining the organizational and/or program leadership structure and how it will develop and engage a stakeholder advisory group at least monthly.

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
5.4	**A. The application** does not provide a sustainability plan or describe how resources will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program for the most effective use of public funds. The program proposes to charge fees. B. Previously funded subgrantees do not document 5 years of prior sustainability. Community partners are not increasing over time. The program proposes to charge fees. *Reviewers should deduct points for failure to provide a sustainability plan.* *Reviewers should deduct points for any applicant who has 10 years of funding and few community partners. These applications will receive fewer points, as this is a statutory requirement of the subgrant.*	**A. The application** provides minimal detail regarding a plan for continuous program improvement and sustainability following the reduction or end of 21CCLC funding. It also offers a minimal description of how resources will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program for the most effective use of public funds. B. Previously funded subgrantees must document a minimum of 5 years of prior sustainability. Community partners are not increasing over time.	**A.** The application provides a sufficient sustainability plan with continuous program improvement and sustainability of the program following the reduction or end of 21CCLC funding. It provides a sufficient description of how resources will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program for the most effective use of public funds. B. Previously funded subgrantees must sufficiently document 5 years of prior sustainability, including the incremental increase of community partners.	**A.** The application provides an extensive sustainability plan with continuous program improvement and resources for the sustainability of the program following the reduction or end of 21CCLC funding. This document provides a clear description of how resources will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program for the most effective use of public funds. B. Previously funded subgrantees must extensively document 5 years of prior sustainability, including the incremental increase of community partners.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Communications Plan (5 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
6.1	The application does not provide the completed template, or the template is incomplete in describing the outreach strategies or activities to be employed to share evaluation and other program information. The local evaluation is not made available on the program website.	The application provides a minimally completed template that outlines the outreach strategies or activities to be employed for sharing evaluation and other program information. Use of a website is mentioned. The local evaluation is not current on the program website.	The application has provided a sufficiently completed template describing their outreach strategies and activities, including the frequency, method, target audience and proposed impact. Target audiences for outreach activities include the broader community, parents, youth, and partners. Some use of a website, social media, and online resources, such as a program calendar, is noted. The local evaluation is made available on the program website (link provided for previous subgrantee).	The application has provided a complete and thorough template describing their outreach strategies and activities, including the frequency, method, target audience and proposed impact. Target audiences for outreach activities include the broader community, parents, youth, and partners. Extensive use of a website, social media, and online resources, such as a program calendar, is noted. The local evaluation is made available on the program website (link provided for previous subgrantee).

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Partnerships Plan (10 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
7.1	The application does not describe existing organizational and/or programmatic partnerships or their role in programming and/or sustainability. Missing an MOU to document each partnership. Only letters of support are provided for partnerships. Fewer than five partnerships are described. *Take into consideration that community partnerships may be unique in rural communities.*	The application minimally describes existing organizational and/or programmatic partnerships and their role in programming and/or sustainability (references to MOUs are allowed). Provides an MOU to document each partnership. *Take into consideration that community partnerships may be unique in rural communities.*	The application sufficiently describes existing organizational and/or programmatic partnerships and their role in programming and/or sustainability (references to MOUs are allowed). Five partnerships are described. Provides an MOU to document each partnership. *Take into consideration that community partnerships may be unique in rural communities.*	The application clearly and extensively describes meaningful existing organizational and/or programmatic partnerships and their impactful role in programming and/or sustainability (references made to MOUs are allowed). Provides a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to document each partnership. More than five partnerships are described. *Take into consideration that community partnerships may be unique in rural communities.*
7.2	Application does not include a description or schedule of meetings with community partners. Missing documentation for most partnerships cited in the narrative. Provides only letters of support. Specific meeting dates do not need to be listed. Calendars are generally created at the beginning of the school year. The program proposes to charge fees.	The application includes a non-recurring schedule of meetings with partners, but it lacks an adequate description of these meetings. The application provides documentation (an MOU) for most partnerships cited. After 5 years, programs have fewer than 10 partners per cohort. Specific meeting dates do not need to be listed. Calendars are generally created at the beginning of the school year.	The application includes a quarterly schedule of meetings with partners, along with some descriptions of these meetings. Outlines a sufficient plan for engaging partners, including recruiting new ones and maintaining relationships with existing partners. The application provides good documentation (an MOU) for almost every partnership cited. After 5 years, programs should have 10 or more partners per cohort. Specific meeting dates do not need to be listed. Calendars are generally created at the beginning of the school year.	Application includes a monthly description of meetings and/or service on or with community group boards or committees. Outlines an extensive plan for meaningfully engaging partners over the lifetime of the subgrant, including recruiting new partners and maintaining relationships with them. The application provides comprehensive documentation (an MOU) for all partnerships cited. After 5 years, the program should have 15 partners per cohort. Specific meeting dates do not need to be listed. Calendars are generally created at the beginning of the school year.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Evaluation Plan (10 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
8.1	The application does not provide evidence that an evaluator is in place. No evidence that data or program information will be collected.	The application provides minimal evidence that an evaluator is in place and offers minimal evidence of the intent to provide data and program information to the state.	The application provides sufficient examples of previous local evaluations (if a prior subgrantee). An experienced evaluator is in place, with the capacity and experience to conduct a comprehensive, rigorous evaluation of program effectiveness. This evaluation will occur both at the local level and in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Education, with the intent to provide all requested data and program information to the state.	The application provides extensive examples from previous local evaluations showing the program's success (if a prior subgrantee). An experienced evaluator is in place, with the capacity and experience to conduct a comprehensive, rigorous evaluation of program effectiveness. This evaluation will occur both at the local level and in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Education, with the intent to provide all requested data and program information to the state.
8.2	There is no evidence of how evaluation results will be used. The proposed evaluation procedures, if any, are not clearly aligned with the project's goals, objectives, and program activities. There is no detailed plan to make the evaluation results public in a form and language that is easily understood.	There is minimal evidence of how evaluation results will be used. The proposed evaluation procedures are somewhat aligned with the project's goals, objectives, and program activities. There is also a minimal plan to make the evaluation results public in a form and language that is easily understood.	There is sufficient evidence that evaluation results will be used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program, as well as to build community support. The proposed evaluation procedures are aligned with the project's goals, objectives, and program activities. There is also a sufficient plan, including timelines, to make the evaluation results public in a form and language that is easily understood.	There is extensive evidence of how evaluation results will be used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program, as well as to build community support. The proposed evaluation procedures are clearly and strongly aligned with the project's goals, objectives, and program activities. There is also a detailed plan, including timelines and strategies, to make the evaluation results public in a form and language that is easily understood.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.

Budget Plan (10 Points Possible)

Indicator	0 Points* (Weak and not fundable)	1-2 Points (Minimally Acceptable)	3-4 Points (Sufficient)	5 Points (Extensive/Strong)
9.1	The basis for cost estimates is not described or does not include reserved funds for evaluation access, administration, or professional development; costs are not justified as necessary and reasonable; and costs do not align with proposed activities. The funding estimator was not used to calculate the award. Sustainability is not documented in the budget narrative, showing the partner contributions. Programs charging fees. This subgrant is for children in poverty and is intended to be free of charge.	The basis for cost estimates is described minimally; costs are justified as necessary and reasonable; and costs basically align with proposed activities. The funding estimator was used to calculate the award. Sustainability must be minimally documented in the budget narrative to show **the contributions of the partners.**	The basis for cost estimates is described sufficiently and includes reserved funds for evaluation, access, administration, and professional development. Costs are sufficiently justified as necessary and reasonable, and they align with the proposed activities. The funding estimator was used to calculate the award. Sustainability must be sufficiently documented in the budget narrative, **showing the contributions of the partners.**	The basis for cost estimates is described in extensive and concise detail, including reserved funds for evaluation, access, administration, and professional development. Costs are clearly justified as necessary and reasonable, and they are strongly aligned with the proposed activities. The funding estimator was used to calculate the award. Sustainability must be extensively documented in the budget narrative, **showing the contributions of the partners.**
9.2	The application does not describe how the requested funds will supplement, rather than supplant, existing funding. Admin costs exceed 8% or provide excessive hours for admin costs. Failure to document sustainability can be supplanting. Align your budget with your project and management plans – failure to document this alignment could result in loss of points.	The application minimally describes how the requested funds will supplement existing funding. Admin costs are within 8% of the budget, and admin hours are within reason. Failure to document sustainability can be supplanting.	The application sufficiently describes how the requested funds will supplement, rather than supplant, existing funding. Admin costs are within 8% of the budget, and admin hours are sufficient. Failure to document sustainability can be supplanting.	The application extensively describes how the requested funds will supplement, rather than supplant, existing funding. Admin costs are below 8% of the budget, and admin is provided with sufficient in-kind hours. Failure to document sustainability can be supplanting.

Consult with the Iowa Department of Education before assigning 0 points.