

# Grant Orientation Webinar After School Education and Safety and 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grants Frequently Asked Questions

## Grant Administration and Accountability

- 1. Question:** Do assurances need to be signed by the superintendent or can they be signed by the local education agency (LEA) authorized agent?

**Answer:** The assurances must be signed by the superintendent or the LEA's authorized agent.

- 2. Question:** Do I need to re-apply for my After School Education and Safety (ASES) program grant if the grant is in its third year?

**Answer:** Grantees are required by statute to renew their ASES grants every three years, according to California *Education Code (EC)* Section 8483.7(a)(1)(A).

- 3. Question:** How long must grant records be maintained?

**Answer:** Documentation of the after school program plan and grant records must be maintained for a minimum of five years after the grant ends.

- 4. Question:** Can the After School Division provide a list of suggested members for the after school collaboration group?

**Answer:** Members of the collaboration group will vary depending on the resources in the local community. It is important to have at least one representative from your school site as part of the group. Other examples include members of community-based organizations, law enforcement, businesses, youth, higher education, and the faith-based community.

## Attendance Requirements

- 5. Question:** If a minimum school day is scheduled for elementary, middle, and junior high school students, is the after school program required to operate until 6:00 p.m.?

**Answer:** Yes. Every elementary, middle, and junior high school operating an after school program must begin the program immediately upon the conclusion of the regular school day, which is defined as any day in which instruction occurs, regardless of the length of the instructional day. The program must operate a minimum of 15 hours per week and remain open until 6:00 p.m. every regular school day (*EC* Section 8483[a][1]).

**6. Question:** What are the attendance requirements for 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) programs?

**Answer:** ASSETs programs must operate for a minimum of 15 hours per week (*EC* Section 8421[c]). There is no minimum attendance requirement for individual high school students participating in the program.

**7. Question:** How does a minimum school day schedule affect attendance for ASSETs programs?

**Answer:** A minimum school day should not have a direct impact on an ASSETs program, since the requirement is to operate 15 hours per week with the option of operating after school only or after school and during any combination of before school, weekends, summer, intersession, and vacation (*EC* Section 8422[d]).

**8. Question:** How is attendance monitored for middle and junior high schools if students attend only three days?

**Answer:** Attendance should be monitored with a sign-in and sign-out sheet the same way it is for students who attend the program each day it is offered.

**9. Question:** What are the required percentages for attendance in ASES programs to ensure the grant will not be reduced?

**Answer:** In any given year, an ASES grantee must achieve a minimum of 75 percent of their attendance goal to prevent receiving a grant reduction and no less than 85 percent of their attendance goal for two consecutive years to ensure the grant amount will not be reduced.

**10. Question:** Can we increase our student enrollment above our daily targeted attendance to ensure we meet our annual attendance goal?

**Answer:** Yes. Some grantees enroll more students to account for potential student absences in the daily program; however, the grantee must ensure that the program maintains a student-to-staff ratio of at least twenty students to one adult (20:1).

**11. Question:** What are the attendance requirements for middle/junior high school students participating in the ASES program?

**Answer:** The Legislature intended that middle/junior high school students attend the program for a minimum of nine hours a week and three days a week to accomplish program goals (*EC* Section 8483[a][2]).

## Early Release/Late Arrival Policies

**12. Question:** Should the after school program have both early release and late arrival policies in place?

**Answer:** ASES and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Elementary and Middle/Junior High School programs are required to have an early release policy in place. A late arrival policy is only required if the program has a before school program or operates a supplemental program during the time the regular school day is not in session.

**13. Question:** Does an early release form need to be completed every day a student has to leave the after school program early or would an early release form on file meet the grant requirement as long as the dates when the student leaves early are documented?

**Answer:** ASES and 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School grantees are required to establish a policy regarding reasonable early release of students from the program. Whether or not the form needs to be completed each day a student leaves early depends on the policy established by the after school program.

**14. Question:** What are acceptable reasons for early release?

**Answer:** The early release policy should be consistent with providing students a safe environment and with the LEAs early release policy for the regular school day. It should be applied on a case-by-case basis. After school grantees are encouraged to work with LEA officials, legal counsel, and other collaborative partners to establish a policy that meets local needs and all legal requirements.

**15. Question:** Is there a minimum amount of time a student must participate in the program to be counted for the purpose of attendance?

**Answer:** A student who attends less than one-half of the before school program cannot be counted for the purposes of attendance. Additionally, every program must establish a policy regarding reasonable late daily arrival of students to the program.

Although there is not a minimum amount of time an elementary school student must participate in the after school program, the Legislature intended for students to attend the full day of the program every day in which they participate.

To provide the opportunity to develop an age-appropriate after school program for middle/junior high school students, programs may implement a flexible attendance schedule for those students; however, priority is to be given to middle/junior high school students who attend daily (*EC* Section 8483[a][3]).

## **Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures**

**16. Question:** Are sign-in and sign-out procedures required in ASES and 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School after school programs?

**Answer:** Yes, all grantees are required to have sign-in and sign-out procedures at each program site.

**17. Question:** Who is responsible for signing students out of the after school program?

**Answer:** Determining who may sign students out of the program is a decision to be made at the local level.

## **Supplemental Programs and Grants**

**18. Question:** Are supplemental grant funds still available for ASES grantees?

**Answer:** Supplemental grant funds are not available through an ASES Universal grant. They are, however, available for current ASES grantees through the 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Request for Application.

**19. Question:** Can weekend activities count toward attendance in ASES and 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School grants?

**Answer:** No, weekend activities cannot count toward attendance for ASES or 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School grants. Weekend attendance; as well as holidays, summer, or other vacation periods, can be counted for attendance for ASSETs grants only. Attendance must be tracked and reported in the After School Support and Information SysTem (ASSIST) database, separate from the base (core) grant.

## **Private School Consultation**

**20. Question:** Does the requirement for 21st CCLC and ASSETs grantees to consult with private schools that meet the funding eligibility criteria and are in the geographic area to be served apply to charter schools?

**Answer:** Yes, the requirement for 21st CCLC and ASSETs grantees to consult with private schools during the development of the program applies to charter schools as well as public and private schools.

## Staff Training

**21. Question:** Can staff training take place during the after school program?

**Answer:** Yes, after school programs may choose to be closed for up to three days per year for the purpose of providing professional development to program staff. Student attendance cannot be counted on the days the after school program is not in operation. The program is still responsible for meeting their attendance requirements. Parents and caregivers must be notified in advance of professional development days to allow sufficient time for them to make alternative arrangements for their child(ren) for the after school hours on these designated days.

**22. Question:** How do furlough days affect attendance?

**Answer:** The program is responsible for meeting their attendance requirement regardless of furlough days. For elementary, middle, and junior high schools, attendance is based on the total grant amount received divided by \$7.50 and then divided by the number of operating days. For example, if an elementary school receives \$112,500.00, they would divide that amount by \$7.50 and then divide by the number of operating days, e.g.,  $\$112,500.00 \div \$7.50 = 15,000.00 \div 175 \text{ operating days} = 86 \text{ students per day}$ .

## Allowable Expenses

**23. Question:** Can after school program funds be used for field trips to museums or parks?

**Answer:** After school program funds are permitted to be used for field trips as long as the grantee can document and demonstrate that a particular activity is part of a lesson plan that has specifically stated education objectives. Grant costs are subject to audit review and a determination as to whether or not they are necessary, reasonable, and adequately documented.

**24. Question:** Can an ASES, a 21st CCLC, or an ASSETs program use funds to provide behavior or attendance incentives?

**Answer:** State and federal grant funds cannot be used to purchase incentives, however, funds from other sources can be used or donated for this purpose.

**25. Question:** Can ASES and 21st CCLC grant funds be used to host a dinner meeting for parents?

**Answer:** The answer is no for programs with an ASES grant because funds are for direct services to students of the program. For the 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School and ASSETs Programs, this expense may be part of the family literacy element and/or the family literacy optional grant.

**26. Question:** Can ASES funds be used for the school principal to attend training regarding the ASES grant?

**Answer:** Yes, the expense to attend training on the ASES grant could be allowable as an administrative cost or in-kind donation.

### **Administrative and Direct Services Costs**

**27. Question:** If after school program staff salaries increase after the grant is awarded, can an adjustment be made in the 15 percent designated for grant administration?

**Answer:** There is no flexibility in this grant requirement.

### **Dual-Funded Sites**

**28. Question:** Must dual-funded sites meet their attendance target for the ASES program before they use their 21st CCLC funds?

**Answer:** A dual-funded program site is one that receives both state ASES funding and federal 21st CCLC funding for after school programs. Dual-funded sites must be fully enrolled in the ASES program before their 21st CCLC funds can be used.

**29. Question:** How do we determine ASES core students versus 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School core students?

**Answer:** Your record keeping practice for determining ASES core and 21st CCLC core students is a local level decision and must accurately track the student attendance in both programs. Your Regional Lead can share ideas on how other sites address this issue.

### **Matching Funds**

**30. Question:** If an after school program obtains funds from outside resources for field trips, can the cost be counted towards the match requirement?

**Answer:** There is no matching requirement for 21st CCLC grant programs, however, it may count for the ASES grant program which requires matching funds that are equivalent to one-third of the total grant amount.

**31. Question:** How does the California Department of Education (CDE) monitor an after school program's match requirement?

**Answer:** The CDE monitors the after school program's match requirement through the Federal Monitoring Process (FPM) and through an annual audit of the grantee.

## Program Requirements

**32. Question:** Must the grantee begin the after school program on the first day of school?

**Answer:** Yes, the grantee is required to begin operating the program the first day of school, pursuant to *EC* Section 8483(a)(1).

**33. Question:** Who is responsible for ensuring that an off-site location is safe?

**Answer:** The grantee is responsible for ensuring the safety of an off-site location.

## Staffing

**34. Question:** Are ASES and 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School grants required to maintain a 20:1 student-to-staff ratio for each activity, or does the staffing requirement apply to the entire after school program?

**Answer:** According to *EC* Section 8483, ASES and 21st CCLC Elementary and Middle/Junior High School grantees are required to ensure that the program maintains a 20:1 student-to-staff ratio for the entire after school program.

**35. Question:** What is the required student-to-staff ratio for the ASSETs program?

**Answer:** There is no student-to-staff ratio established for the ASSETs program.

**36. Question:** What are the minimum qualifications for an after school program director and instructional aide?

**Answer:** The grantee is required to ensure that all staff members, who directly supervise students, meet the minimum qualification for an instructional aide according to the policies of the school district (*EC* Section 8483.4).

## Nutrition Issues

**37. Question:** Are we in compliance with the daily snack requirement if we serve food from our school district's lunch provider and also serve at least two servings of fruit/vegetable, milk, bread/grain, and meat/meat alternate?

**Answer:** Not necessarily. All snacks and meals served must meet the California nutrition standards stated in *EC* 49431.

**38. Question:** Can the after school program serve more than one snack?

**Answer:** Yes, however, grantees are required to provide only one daily nutritious snack that meets the California nutrition standards as defined in *EC* Section 8284.3(d).

**39. Question:** Does the ASES program need to meet federal nutrition guideline requirements?

**Answer:** The ASES program only needs to meet federal nutrition guideline requirements if they are receiving reimbursement from the United States Department of Agriculture.

### **Eligibility Requirements for Students**

**40. Question:** Can ASES funds be used to serve transitional kindergarteners?

**Answer:** Yes, transitional kindergarten students should be considered as a subset of kindergarten students and, therefore, may be served.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

**41. Question:** Can a systematic and structured instruction—such as providing phonics lessons aligned with California State Standards—be offered in the after school program?

**Answer:** Yes, but such structured instruction should not duplicate that which occurs during the regular day.

**42. Question:** If a student attends a tutoring program funded by an entity other than the ASES program, can that student's attendance count towards the ASES program?

**Answer:** No, the student's attendance cannot be counted if the student is being serviced by another program with a different funding source.

**43. Question:** What type of after school services are recommended for kindergarten and first grade students?

**Answer:** Kindergarten and first grade students would participate in the same components as all other students: educational literacy, enrichment, and a nutritious snack. Activities should be geared to the appropriate age and grade levels.

**44. Question:** Would it be sufficient for our high school to notify parents of English literacy programs and parenting classes in the area, even though we do not have a family literacy grant?

**Answer:** Yes, information about local resources that may help connect parents with programs and services they might need would be sufficient.

**45. Question:** Are you aware of any districts that have successful alignment of the after school program to the regular school day? And if so, how might we contact them to collaborate and gain their knowledge?

**Answer:** Your Regional Lead will have first-hand knowledge of districts that have successful alignment of after school programs to the regular day. Also, check the Web links and resources listed in the Technical Assistance section of this document for additional examples.

### **Technical Assistance**

**46. Question:** Is there a Web link listing training opportunities that are available for after school staff?

**Answer:** The California After School Resource Center (CASRC) provides access to materials, resources, online trainings, tools, and supportive services for after school program staff. Information and resources are available on the CASRC Web site at <http://www.californiaafterschool.org/>.

Additionally, the California After School Network supports after school program staff by providing links to state policy makers, offering a collective voice to support policies, research, public awareness campaigns, and innovative strategies. Information and resources are posted on the Web site at <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/>.