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NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DATE: December 29, 2020

TO: Patrick J. O'Donnell, Clerk of the Nebraska Legislature

FROM: Jan Handa, State Coordinator

RE: Report on Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant Program (Neb. Rev. Stat. Sec. 79-2509)

The Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant Program Act was created by the Nebraska Legislature to promote academic achievement in high-need schools during out-of-school time afterschool and during summer break. One percent of the education proceeds from the Nebraska Lottery began depositing into this fund on July 1, 2016. Several stakeholder input sessions conducted in the spring and fall of 2016 informed the eligibility criteria, competition timeline and development of policies and procedures for the administration of the Two-Year Opportunity Grant program. Applicants were required to offer at least 15 student contact hours of expanded learning grant activities in both the fall and spring school terms (summer is optional). Per statute, these grants require 1:1 matching funds. Eligible applicants must have been either a school district or community-based organization that intended to collaboratively deliver services in eligible 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs) where at least 40% of students participated in free or reduced-price lunch. Eligible sites must have been in operation at least five years, in good standing and receiving funding from a 21st CCLC Continuation Grant.

The inaugural competition was conducted in the spring/summer of 2017 and resulted in the award of thirteen grants totaling \$286,121. Proposals were reviewed by external teams that made funding recommendations to the State Board of Education. Grant amounts ranged from \$10,000-\$30,000 and there were contributions from 63 community partners to collaboratively deliver services. Grants had a two-year grant period of June 7, 2017-August 31, 2019. After award, all grantees met with the 21st CCLC statewide evaluator to develop an agreed upon evaluation plan that included methods of monitoring and/or measuring the effectiveness of the proposed activities using 21st CCLC data collection regimens. These thirteen projects provided an expanded learning opportunity club at thirty-two elementary and thirteen middle school 21st CCLC sites across Nebraska. The programming at these forty-five sites provided additional hands-on learning and positive youth development experiences for students. There were 3,380 students served during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Of these students, 81% were eligible for free/reduced lunch, 17% were English learners, 68% were an ethnic minority and 18% were verified for special education. Individual project profiles that include an overview, list of sites, partners and focus areas are available at <https://www.education.ne.gov/elo/two-year-opportunity-grant/>.

Two additional competitions were conducted in the spring of 2019 and 2020. The 2019 two-year cohort included thirteen grants serving forty-eight sites awarded a total of \$310,738 with a grant period of June 7, 2019-June 30, 2021. The 2020 one-year cohort included nine grants serving thirty sites that were awarded a total of \$164,577 with a grant period of June 5, 2020-June 30, 2021. Afterschool and summer programming in both cohorts have been impacted by school closures in Spring, 2020 and continue to be challenged by the limitations and restrictions due to COVID-19 during the 2020-21 school year.

To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.