

WDE 21CCLC

21st Century Community Learning Center

2023-24 Evaluation Brief

Introduction

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Nita M. Lowey [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) Title IV, Part B (21st CCLC) Grant Program offers year-round funding to eligible school districts and community-based organizations to implement after-school and summer learning opportunities. Authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, the grant program supports academic and enrichment activities for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

Applicants must provide data demonstrating the specific needs of students and families in their communities, and their proposed program services must align with the needs and competencies outlined in the [Wyoming Profile of a Graduate](#). Hours of program services vary by applicant, but must adhere to research-based recommendations for programming¹ to be competitive. 21st CCLC grants are awarded for five-year cycles, during which school districts and organizations work to strengthen program quality while also cultivating community partnerships to enhance program resources and sustainability efforts.

In the 2023-24 school year, the WDE awarded 33 subgrants to 23 subgrantees. Six of the 23 subgrantees had multiple 21st CCLC grants operating during the 2023-24 summer and school year. Overall, these 23 subgrantees provided program services at 79 individual centers across the state. Centers are the physical locations of the 21st CCLC programs. Subgrantees can be a school district or community-based organization and are the fiscal agents of the grant and are responsible for 21st CCLC program implementation, budgeting, and federal reporting requirements.

Student Snapshots

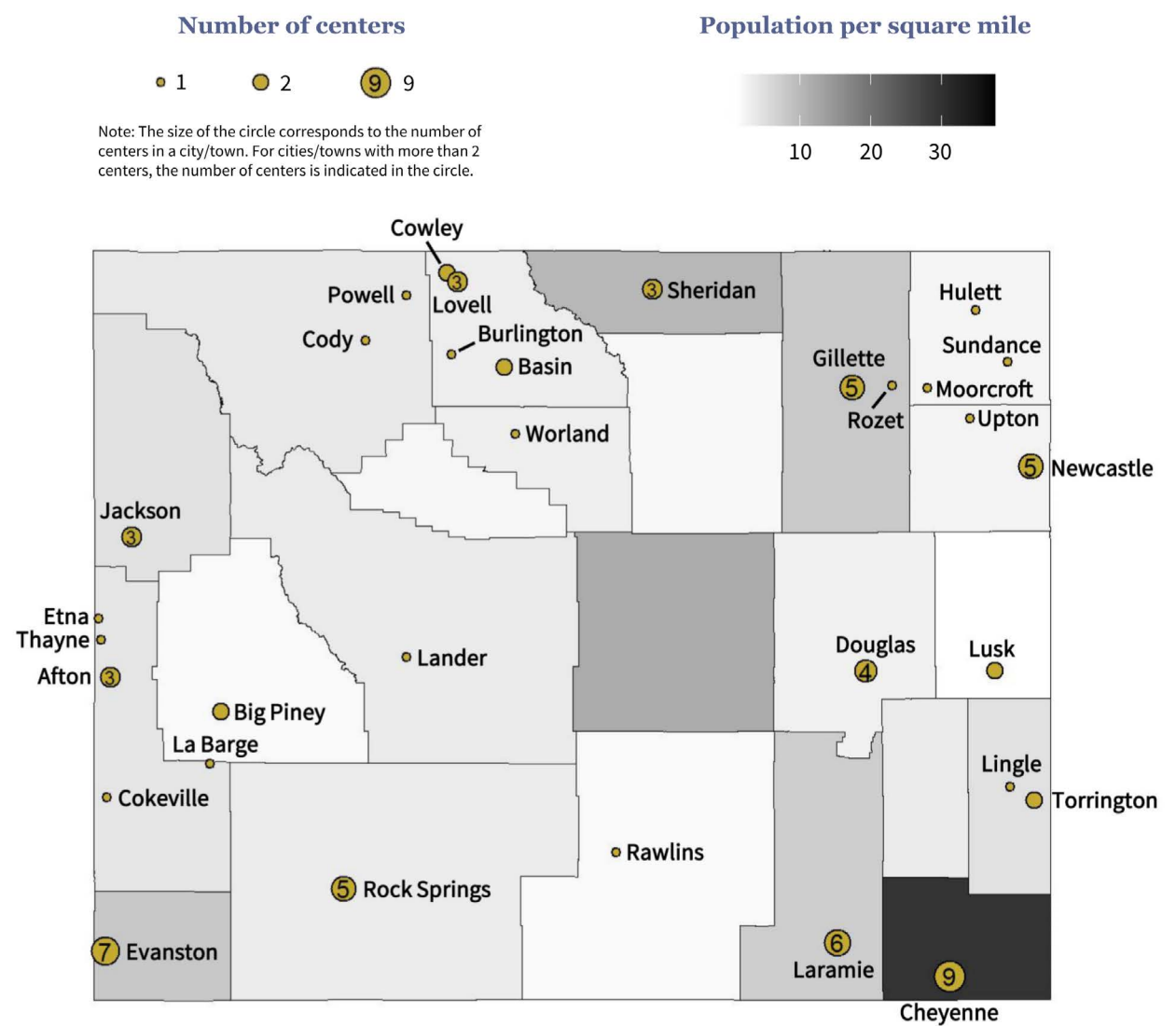
The snapshots below showcase a few success stories happening across the state that were captured during feedback sessions with local centers.

- One student has been part of their local program since preschool and is currently engaged in tutoring, small group, and an after-school club. At the end of the summer program, he was reading 6 months below grade level. As of February, he has reached grade-level reading, making 13 months of progress in just 7 months.
- One sixth-grade student has participated in their local program since preschool. Since she started tutoring over a year ago, her confidence has soared. Last spring, she received the 'Best Work of Poetry' award for their Young Authors contest, a milestone achievement that she still proudly mentions.

1 Vandell, D. L., Lee, K. T. H., Whitaker, A. A., & Pierce, K. M. (2020). Cumulative and differential effects of early child care and middle childhood out-of-school time on adolescent functioning. *Child Development*, 91(1), 129-144.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13136>

Center Locations

The map below shows the locations of centers across Wyoming by county and population density, including the number of centers in each city and town. Overall, the physical locations of the 21stCCLC activities span the state in all directions and are concentrated in the most populous counties, including towns like Cheyenne in the southeast (9 centers), Evanston in the southwest (7 centers), and Gillette in the northeast (5 centers). Some of the least populous counties include cities and towns with at least one center, like Big Piney, Lusk, and Rawlins. There are four counties without a center, including one of the most populous counties in central Wyoming.



The Simple 6

Wyoming 21st CCLC programs focus on the following six areas, known as the Simple 6, to continually design, implement, and refine the quality of after-school and summer opportunities to meet the needs of the students and families in their communities:

- Intentional Design.
- Quality Staff.
- Continuous Improvement.
- Evaluation.
- Family & Community Engagement.
- Compliance with Purpose-Knowledge, Skills, & Mindsets.

2023-24 Program Highlights

Across after-school and summer learning activities in 2023-24, Wyoming 21st CCLC grant programs provided important programming to students in their communities.²

Wyoming 21st CCLC programs served:

- **6,389** students in K-12th grade.
 - **4,807** students in K-5th grade.
 - **1,582** students in 6th-12th grade.
- **14,760** family members through engagement activities, including family literacy nights and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) events.

On average, each of the Wyoming 21st CCLC programs offered:

- **372** hours of academic support and enrichment.
- **289** hours of STEM activities.
- **140** hours of Career Competencies and Career Readiness activities.

21st CCLC programs made progress towards annual state performance goals in the following ways:

- **74%** of students in 1st-5th grade showed improved engagement in learning, based on reports from school-day teachers.
- **79%** of students in 1st-12th grade who had a school attendance rate of 90% or below in the 2022-23 school year showed improved attendance in 2023-24.
- **49%** of 21st CCLC grant program participants were from low-income backgrounds.

The average cost per student for comprehensive summer and school year programming ranged from \$900 to \$1,600.

² Source: Wyoming 21st CCLC Grant 21 Annual Performance Report (APR) System and Wyoming Department of Education 521 Form data

Among those who participated in Summer 2024 programming:

- **68%** of students met their math academic goals.
- **70%** of students met their English Language Arts academic goals.

“The staff always makes sure my child feels safe and cared for. The staff is always willing to take the time to do what is best for my child—it is more than an ‘after-school’ job! I love all the things this program brings, not only for my kids but our small community.”

- WY School District Teacher

Quality Improvement Efforts and Findings

Wyoming 21st CCLC programs work continuously to understand whether their activity offerings meet the needs of participating students and build engagement in their programs. Quality after-school and summer learning programs provide a space for children and teens to explore interests, build meaningful relationships with caring and supportive adults, and connect their passions to academics, college and career readiness, and community service. Research has demonstrated that students who consistently attend quality after-school and summer learning programs can increase their positive social behaviors and connection to school while decreasing problem behaviors.^{3/4} To support continuous improvement and positive student outcomes, all Wyoming 21st CCLC programs use the Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS), a suite of research-based tools measuring four areas: program quality, youth engagement, youth outcomes, and long-term growth. This quality improvement process includes input from program staff and students, as well as observations of programming.

Below is a summary of findings based on data collected in 2023-24 using two of the APAS tools: the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes for Staff (SAYO-Staff) and the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes for Youth (SAYO-Youth). The analyses focused on engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving among students in Wyoming 21st CCLC programs and whether these outcomes were related to specific program elements, such as family engagement activities.

- **88%** of students reported that they enjoyed and were engaged in the program.³
- **64%** of students frequently demonstrated strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills.⁴
- The more that 21st CCLC centers welcomed and engaged a student’s family, such as providing projects that related to their family, the more engaged the student was in the program.^{5/6}

3 Source: Spring 2024 SAYO-Youth

4 Source: Spring 2024 SAYO-Staff

5 Note: Pearson Correlation was significant at $p < .05$

6 Source: Spring 2024 SAYO-Youth & Spring 2024 SAYO-Staff

“The relationship between [the 21st CCLC program and the school district] is a win-win. Sharing grants, staff in the summer, facilities, and buses benefits students in the school year as well as after school and during the summer. Students have enrichment, which supports teachers and keeps students engaged academically for a longer portion of the day and throughout the summer. Students also develop and deepen their passion for books through engaging activities and enthusiastic teachers.”

- WY School District Teacher

Next Steps

The Wyoming 21st CCLC Consultant is currently redesigning the state and local program evaluation systems with the input of subgrantees and in partnership with the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC). The 21st CCLC Consultant’s focus areas for the 2025-26 school year are 1) prioritizing data collection systems and processes to demonstrate progress towards 21st CCLC state outcomes, 2) convening a 21st CCLC evaluation workgroup, and 3) strengthening onboarding processes for new subgrantees. In addition, the UEPC will work with subgrantees to build their skills and competencies in understanding how to identify, collect, and analyze formative 21st CCLC data using data discussion protocols, progress monitoring templates, and other tools to promote local evaluation efforts. The UEPC team is also developing an evaluation handbook to support efficient and sustainable evaluation practices at the local level.

For questions about this brief or the 21st CCLC grant program, please contact Karen Bierhaus, Wyoming 21st CCLC Consultant, at karen.bierhaus@wyo.gov.