



**NATIONAL
MARINE
SANCTUARY
FOUNDATION**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RE: THE SELECTION OF AN
EVALUATION CONSULTANT TO
SUPPORT WORK WITH THE NATIONAL
MARINE SANCTUARY FOUNDATION IN
ITS MANAGEMENT OF THE NOAA-21ST
CCLC WATERSHED STEM EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIP GRANTS PILOT
PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation intends to secure a contract for the creation and implementation of an evaluation study to assess the process, implementation and outcome of a new collaborative pilot program administered through a subcontract of a financial assistance award received from the NOAA Office of Education. The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to define the requirements, solicit proposals, and to gain adequate information from which NMSF may assess such services.

ISSUING OFFICE

This RFP is issued by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Silver Spring, Maryland. All correspondence regarding this RFP must be addressed to:

Natalie Ducharme-Barth
Program Assistant

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
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Silver Spring, MD 20910
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COST LIABILITY

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation assumes no responsibility for liability for costs incurred by the consultant prior to execution of a contract.

TIME FRAME

The work noted below will be contracted until December 15, 2017. Start date should be no sooner than March 20, 2017.

NOAA-21ST CCLC WATERSHED STEM EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP GRANTS PILOT PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) funds 21st CCLC sites to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local learning standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and STEM; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Grants funded by NMSF through the NOAA-21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Program will provide access to dynamic academic enrichment experiences to program participants at a minimum of twenty-five 21st CCLC program sites in at least five of the seven geographic areas served by the [NOAA Bay-Watershed Education and Training \(B-WET\) program](#). A request for proposals for these grants is open from January 12, 2017 - February 11, 2017. Information on this competition is available here: <https://www.marinesanctuary.org/blog/applications-now-accepted-new-stem-environmental-education-grants/> Grant activities will focus on delivering components of [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences](#), or MWEEs, led by B-WET program staff and a network of high-capacity grantees and partners, to this high need audience. The MWEE is the core B-WET program experience and is based on research literature, evaluation results and lessons learned from over a decade of program implementation.

PREVIOUS EVALUATION

The NOAA B-WET program has been an agency leader in evaluation. It was identified by the [National Research Council](#) as “the most rigorous evaluation design employed among the NOAA evaluation programs.” This recognition was in reference to a Chesapeake B-WET program evaluation in 2007 that showed a link between students' participation in B-WET-funded MWEEs and an increase in their environmental stewardship and literacy. The B-WET program has also developed resources to support grantee reporting and evaluation and is currently implementing a national evaluation system. This system will help the program monitor and adjust activities based on information about best practices, and support grantees in using those practices. More information about B-WET evaluation work is available here: <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources>

The work funded under this request for proposals will be the first evaluation conducted on the pilot year of implementation of this new collaborative project between NOAA and ED. However, it is expected that this project will draw, to the extent practicable, on previous evaluation of the NOAA B-WET and ED 21st CCLC programs, as well as other similar federal agency STEM partnerships. The U.S. Department of Education is partnering with three federal agencies in addition to NOAA: the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). These programs all employ a variety of mechanisms (direct, face to face engagement, both real time and archived web-based professional development and technical assistance) to make high quality STEM programs available to student participants and to build capacity among participating 21st CCLC staff.

Each of these partners retains an independent evaluator to conduct implementation or evaluation studies in order to determine what aspects of these partnerships work well, what may be improved, and to assess impact on participants. For the efforts which are currently being piloted, such as the collaboration with NOAA, an implementation study is conducted; more mature efforts no longer in pilot phase include more comprehensive program evaluation. The implementation studies rely on a range of evaluation methods. However they all include use of the Dimensions of Success (DoS) observation tool that defines twelve indicators of STEM program quality in out-of-school time (e.g., after school, summer camps, etc.) For more information, visit: <http://www.pearweb.org/tools/dos.html> or http://www.pearweb.org/tools/flyers/DoSGuide_ForOrganizations_2014.pdf

In addition to the implementation studies, ED, in collaboration with Synergy Enterprises, Inc., has retained the Activation Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley to conduct synthesis evaluation studies. The overarching constructs to be studied in the synthesis evaluation will include awareness, understanding, attitudes, preferences, or experiences of staff and student participants.

WORK STATEMENT

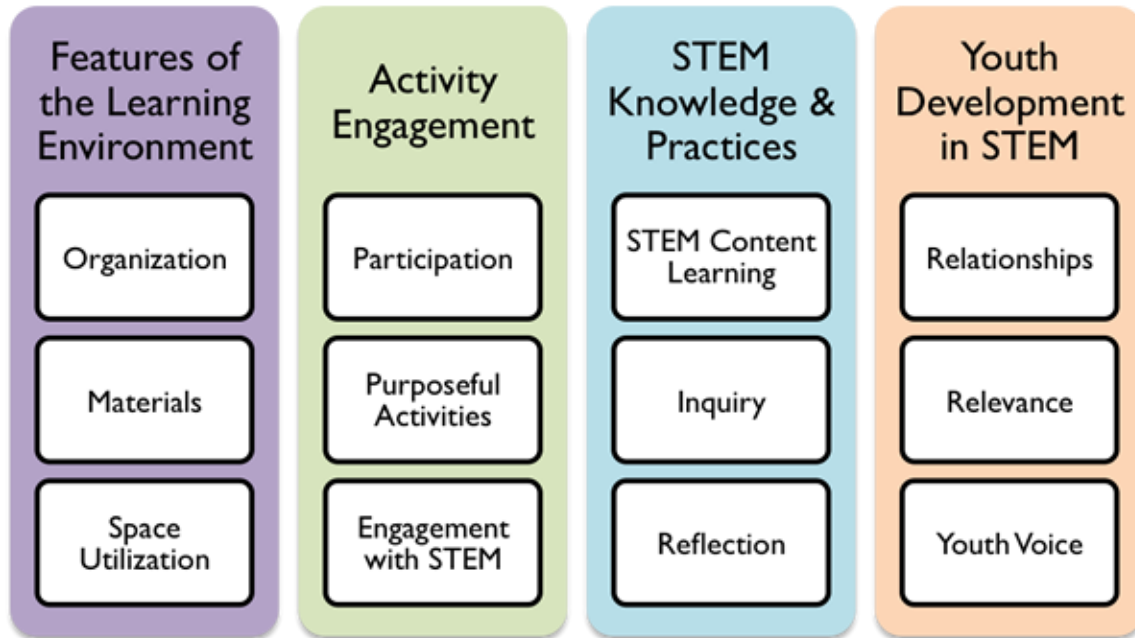
NMSF is issuing this request for proposals (RFP) to identify an evaluator to assess the processes, implementation and outcome of this collaborative program pilot. Evaluation findings will be used by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the NMSF to help inform potential replication and expansion efforts and to produce lessons for the field around promising strategies for inspiring and engaging K-12 youth in watershed-related activities during out-of-school and expanded learning time using the natural environment as an outdoor classroom. The total amount of this RFP is \$70,000.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Through this RFP, the NMSF will select a consultant organization to work collaboratively with NMSF staff and partners (the U.S. Department of Education and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to design, develop, and implement a descriptive evaluation plan for this pilot program. The evaluation plan will include an analysis and summary of the experiences of the 21st CCLC program staff and student participants and provide recommendations for future implementation of NOAA's "Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences" pursued as part of STEM programming initiatives under ED's 21st CCLC program. This will include conducting observations using the Dimensions of Success (DoS) observation tool and illustrated below, and in Appendix 1. The consultant must provide for DoS observations meeting the following criteria:

- observe at a minimum of five participating 21st CCLC program sites across at least three B-WET regions
- complete at least 2 observations (3-5 recommended) per site at approximately similar intervals (early in collaboration, middle, late, etc.)
- observation process involves live observation of an activity, written data report, and some plan for sharing feedback with staff (this will depend on the local 21st CCLC site director's existing feedback structure).

Data must be uploaded to an online database within 24 hours of live observation. DoS observations can only be completed by external evaluators or internal program staff who have completed DoS certification training. Having pairs of internal-external observers can facilitate translating the results into practice.



DoS measures twelve dimensions that fall in 4 broad domains: *Features of the Learning Environment, Activity Engagement, STEM Knowledge and Practices, and Youth Development in STEM.* (<http://www.pearweb.org>)

For specific information about the kinds of variables that should be tracked and assessed as part of the evaluation, please see “Appendix 1. Overview of the DoS Dimensions.” To learn more about how to get trained in DoS, please visit: <http://www.pearweb.org/tools/dos.html#HowTo>

Program activities will be implemented at 21st CCLC sites in two sessions: March-May 2017 and June-August 2017. The evaluator and/or their trained designees should aim to conduct observations at programs in each session, if possible. The evaluation plan should also include strategies for improving 21st CCLC program site capacity to carry out evaluation activities, such as supporting a cycle of quality improvement using the DoS planning and feedback/coaching tools.

NMSF and NOAA are also interested in answering the following questions to the extent possible given the project timeline and budget. In addressing these questions the consultant should review existing instruments developed for the B-WET national evaluation system and attempt to align this evaluation work with that system, as appropriate. Background on the B-WET national evaluation may be found here: <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/grantee-resources/national-evaluation>

- What models of implementation are being delivered by recipients, and how well do these models work for 21CCLC site staff?
- What specifically is working well, and what isn't? We are particularly interested in program elements that serve multi-cultural audiences well (e.g. ELL - English language learners, ESL - English as a second language students.)
- How may program challenges be addressed through modifications to the request for proposals, resources and support provided by NOAA, or other aspects of program design?
- What evidence is there that project audiences will make decisions and engage in behaviors that protect and restore ocean, coastal and/or Great Lakes watersheds as a result of program participation?
- What recommendations can you provide for future program evaluation to address participant outcomes, and how may this work be aligned with existing B-WET evaluation efforts?

Lastly, in order to support the U.S. Department of Education's evaluation of all of the agency STEM partnerships, the evaluator is encouraged to consider the specific constructs provided in Appendix 2 when developing the evaluation plan. Evidence addressing any of these constructs will be shared with ED's synthesis evaluator. Note that these are for consideration only, and should not be prioritized above the DoS observations and other specific program questions described above. Guidance on common instruments and metrics to explore these constructs may be available.

Implementation of the evaluation plan will be in accordance with applicable Office of Management and Budget Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requirements. Since the timeline for this project does not allow for PRA clearance, evaluation activities conducted under this project must not trigger the PRA. The evaluator will also have to be aware of, and adhere to, any relevant policies pertaining to data collection from program audiences, as provided by grantees. The proposed evaluation plan will need to be reviewed and approved by NMSF, NOAA, and ED.

Specific responsibilities of the evaluator (with input from staff) include:

- Participation in a kick-off meeting with key staff to review program goals and objectives, associated activities, evaluation criteria, questions and strategy, data collection (what, who, when, where, how), timeline, etc.
- Review of the program's logic model (see Appendix 3).
- Development and implementation of a process evaluation strategy.
- Documentation and assessment of the effectiveness of program training and materials.
- Documentation of preliminary/pilot program outcomes.
- Design and/or identification of data collection instruments/process.
- Implementation of data collection procedures.
- Designation of staff to complete required training and related activities for purposes of administering and collecting data using the DOS observation tool
- Provide for at least 2 DoS observations (3-5 recommended) of a minimum of five participating 21st CCLC program sites across at least three B-WET regions, as described under Scope of Services above.
- Advise the NMSF and partners on how to incorporate into the evaluation work scope any planning, coordination, follow-up activities, additional analyses, and identification of data and documentation relevant to the U.S. Department of Education synthesis evaluation, as applicable.
- Preparation and submission of a final report which includes any revisions/corrections to the program pilot's logic model (see Appendix 3).
- Participation in program training meeting (i.e., share information about evaluation, data collection process, etc.).
- Participation in monthly coordination calls with collaborating partners.
- Presentation of findings to program team and lead partners (U.S. Department of Education and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

Responsibilities of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and its partners:

- Ensure compliance across the project.
- Coordinate between the evaluator and partner agencies (NOAA and Department of Education).
- Educate the evaluator about the program and desired outcomes.
- Provide feedback about proposed evaluation design and approach.
- Update evaluator on program changes.
- Provide guidance around reporting.
- Collaborate with evaluator in collecting data.
- Regularly monitor contract

DELIVERABLES

1. Descriptive evaluation plan, approved by NMSF and partners (NOAA, ED)
2. At least 2 DoS observations (3-5 recommended) of a minimum of five participating 21st CCLC program sites across at least three B-WET regions.
3. Additional data collection to address program evaluation questions and support U.S. ED synthesis evaluation (as determined in collaboration with the NMSF and NOAA as part of the evaluation plan)
4. Final Report and Presentation - A summary report incorporating findings from the DOS observations and any additional data collection.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Kickoff Meeting – within 2 weeks of award

Draft Evaluation Plan – April 7, 2017 (or 3 weeks after the award)

Final Evaluation Plan – May 1, 2017 (or 6 weeks after the award)

Conduct DOS observations of a minimum of five participating 21st CCLC program sites across at least three B-WET regions – August 15, 2017

Analysis of Data – September 15, 2017

Draft Evaluation Report – October 13, 2017

Final Evaluation Report and Presentation – December 1, 2017

Final Closeout Meeting – Before December 15, 2017

	Communication	Frequency
1	Touch base with NMSF Program Assistant and NOAA staff via email	Weekly
2	Communicate via phone with NMSF Program Assistant and NOAA staff	Monthly
3	Travel to meet with NMSF/NOAA/U.S. Department of Education	As needed

INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM ALL PROPOSAL SUBMITTERS

Preferred Contractor Qualifications

NMSF is looking for a contractor, individual, or firm to fulfill NMSF's needs for supporting the goals of our grant with NOAA Office of Education related to the NOAA-21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Partnership grant program.

The selected subcontractor is required to have the following qualifications:

- Minimum 5 years professional experience, specifically in evaluating education programs
- Familiar with the *Dimensions of Success (DoS)* tool and certified to conduct DoS observations, or ability to quickly become certified (trainings are offered monthly and there are calibration exercises required afterwards).
- Ability to multi-task and work under tight deadlines.
- Selected contractor shall have knowledge of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, the NOAA Office of Education and the NOAA B-WET program and the U.S. Department of Education and 21st CCLC program (mission, management, current priority issues and projects as well as rules and regulations).
- Contractor is available to travel on site or arrange for designees to conduct DoS observations and work with NOAA and ED staff.
- Selected contractor shall work well with a team, contributing to common goals; and shall take and give criticism constructively, assimilating suggestions and directions into positive results.
- Contractor shall be willing to make suggestions and offer solutions as appropriate and be able to maintain a high level of professionalism and integrity at all times.
- Contractor should demonstrate experience and success working with a diverse audience.

Proposal Content and Requirements

In order to be considered for selection and a possible agreement, your proposal must be complete and include the items listed below.

Evaluation Proposal must include the following

- A **cover page** with the individual or firm's name, date, mailing address, telephone number, fax number, email address, and web site.
- A **concise description** of the contractor's principal expertise including education, past experience, clients, knowledge strengths, and products and services offered (1 page limit). The NMSF is particularly interested in organizations that have a demonstrated history of evaluating out-of-school time STEM learning programs and using the Dimensions of Success (DoS) tool.
- A **proposal** providing the scope of services noted above in this RFP, proof of history and capacity to provide deliverables similar in size, complexity, and nature to those described in this RFP (*5 page limit with no less than 11pt font*). Proposal should include the proposed evaluation approach, a potential timeline describing major steps in the evaluation process, and information about potential constraints and how they will be addressed
- **Qualifications**, related to the specialized qualifications noted above with titles, bios, and brief list of clients served in the capacity proposed. Include any accreditations, licenses, or special training related to the services requested. Attaching a resume or CV is acceptable. (*1 page limit*).
- **Links to, and, examples of other work** similar to what is requested, produced for past clients. (*1 page limit*).
- At least **three references** for similar clients or projects produced by you or your company. Please include the name of the organization, name of the contact person, address, telephone number, and email. Please include references who can speak not only toward end product satisfaction, but toward project management experience. (*1 page limit*).

Cost Proposal:

Your price quote, not to exceed \$70,000, should cover the full scope of services and define estimated expenses for project management, design, and travel.

Significant travel may be required for this project. Applicants should include details of travel and related expenses in their cost proposal. Please review the GSA guidelines for a benchmark for reasonable travel costs: <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/26429>. Since sites have not been selected at the time of this solicitation, it is understood that travel costs included in the proposal will be estimates.

Rates quoted must be guaranteed for one year.

Submission of Proposal

Questions

Please address all questions regarding this RFP to Natalie Ducharme-Barth, natalie@marinesanctuary.org

Submitting Your Proposal

NMSF requires responses to this RFP to be delivered electronically, via email (or a cloud-based drive if file size is larger than 10MB) as an Adobe™ .pdf file to natalie@marinesanctuary.org. **Proposals must be received electronically no later than 5 p.m. ET on February 24, 2017.**

NMSF will send a confirmation by email within two business days of receiving your submission that your proposal was received and all files are accessible. If you do not receive a confirmation email within two business days, please contact Natalie Ducharme-Barth, natalie@marinesanctuary.org. It is the submitter's responsibility to ensure that NMSF receives the proposal prior to the specified closing date. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on experience, proposal, and price quote. Each submission will be evaluated for how well the proposal meets NMSF's goals for the NOAA Office of Education grant and the goals of the NOAA-21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Partnership Grants Pilot Program, quality of the presentation, and the qualifications of the proposed contractor. NMSF may opt to contact finalists by phone or request an in person meeting.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation reserves the right to reject any or all submitted responses to this RFP, and to waive any irregularities. The award of an agreement, if made by NMSF, will be based upon a total review and analysis of each proposal and projected costs.

Once a vendor has been selected, the vendor and NMSF will negotiate an official agreement. NMSF shall not be contractually obligated to any vendor until duly authorized representatives of both the vendor and NMSF sign a mutually negotiated agreement.

NMSF expects to notify the selected subcontractor no later than March 24, 2017, and execute a contract based on the response to the proposal immediately thereafter.

Key Definitions

[21st CCLC](#) – 21st Century Community Learning Centers provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, especially students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

[NOAA](#) – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[B-WET](#) – NOAA Bay-Watershed Education and Training Program. The NOAA B-WET program funds locally relevant, authentic experiential STEM learning in seven regions of the United States: California, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Hawai'i, New England, and the Pacific Northwest

[MWEE](#) – Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience. MWEEs are multi-stage activities that include learning both outdoors and in the classroom, and aim to increase the environmental literacy of all participants. The MWEE is the core B-WET program experience and is based on research literature, evaluation results and lessons learned.

[STEM](#) – Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics

Resources

National Research Council. (2015). Identifying and Supporting Productive STEM Programs in Out-of-School Settings. Committee on Successful Out-of-School STEM Learning. Board on Science Education, Division of Behavior and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC. National Academies Press.

The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education and Resilience.
<http://www.pearweb.org/>

Appendix 1: Overview of the DoS Dimensions

FEATURES OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are the activities delivered in an organized matter? •Are materials available and do transitions flow? 	Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are the materials appropriate for the students, aligned with the STEM learning goals, and appealing to the students? 	Space Utilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is the space utilized in a way that is conducive to OST learning? •Are there any distractions that impact the learning experience?
ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT		
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are student participating in all aspects of activities equally? •Are boys participating more than girls? Are some students dominating group work? 	Purposeful Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are the activities related to the STEM learning goals? 	Engagement with STEM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are students doing the cognitive work while engaging in hands-on activities that help them explore STEM content?
STEM KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES		
STEM Content Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is STEM content presented accurately during activities? •Do the students' comments, questions, and performance during activities reflect accurate uptake of STEM content 	Inquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are students participating in the practices of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, etc.? •Are students observing, collecting data, building explanations, etc.? 	Reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Do students have opportunities to reflect and engage in meaning-making about the activities and related content?
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN STEM		
Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are there positive student-facilitator and student-student interactions? 	Relevance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is there evidence that the facilitator and students are making connections between the STEM content and activities and students' everyday lives and experiences. 	Youth Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are students encouraged to voice their ideas/opinions? •Do students make important and meaningful choices that shape their learning experience?

Source: http://www.pearweb.org/tools/flyers/DoSGuide_ForOrganizations_2014.pdf

Appendix 2: U.S. Department of Education’s Synthesis Evaluation Constructs

Evaluation constructs for consideration:

- Confidence in thinking about/understanding/learning about/practicing this area (science/engineering)
- Awareness of relevance of these skills/this information/this discipline to the real world
- Connections between these activities and subjects studied/learning during the school day
- Interest in participating in more activities like this:
 - through a club, camp, internet-based exploration or other out-of-school activity
 - through taking additional classes in this area
- Enthusiasm for this area of endeavor (science/engineering)
- Opportunities to develop/apply/see real-world relevance of problem solving/collaborative problem solving
- Interest in doing more (real-world) problem solving/collaborative problem solving
- Opportunities to develop/apply/see relevance of critical thinking
- Opportunities to develop/apply/see relevance of persistence/resilience
- Opportunities to develop/apply/see relevance of systems thinking
- Awareness of careers in this area and relevant educational pathways

Appendix 3: NOAA 21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Partnership Grants Program Logic Model

NOAA-21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Partnership Grants Logic Model

Aligning with 21st CCLC program goals and objectives will improve NOAA's ability to help students meet state and local learning standards in STEM and other core subjects and increase implementation of environmental education during non-school hours.

Inputs/Resources	Activities/Outputs	Audience/ Participation	Short-term Outcomes (Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, Aspirations)	Mid-term Outcomes (Changes in Behaviors)	Long-term Outcomes (Changes in Conditions)
<p>WSE Partnership Grant Funding</p> <p>21st CCLC sites and staff</p> <p>EE providers and their resources</p> <p>NOAA staff (B-WET)</p> <p>NOAA resources (i.e., data, products, places, tools, and personnel)</p> <p>External evaluators</p> <p>National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) staff</p> <p>U.S. ED staff</p>	<p>EE providers and CCLC site staff, with assistance from NOAA B-WET staff, partner to create and implement environmental education programs for students. The programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are implemented as academic enrichment during non-school hours, - use best practices for STEM education using the environment, emphasizing STEM skills, - address specific 21st CCLC site program objectives (such as increasing student engagement and achievement, supporting college and career readiness, responding to family members' needs), - engage students in hands-on environmental education opportunities that take place both outdoors and indoors, - promote student interest in careers in STEM, - meet the student learning and staff capacity-building needs of 21st CCLC program sites - draw on NOAA scientific information and resources and MWEE best practices 	<p>21st CCLC students (particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools)</p>	<p>21st CCLC Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve STEM skills - are more interested in the STEM fields and associated careers - are more aware of applications and relevance of STEM to their own lives and communities - have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, and motivations to protect and restore ocean, coastal, and/or Great Lakes watersheds 	<p>Students perform well in core academic subjects</p> <p>Students make decisions and engage in behaviors that protect and restore ocean, coastal and/or Great Lakes watersheds</p>	<p>STEM based environmental education continues to be implemented as an important component of 21st CCLC academic enrichment</p> <p>21st CCLC students are more environmentally literate, engaged in learning, and knowledgeable in core academic subjects</p>
		<p>EE Providers</p>	<p>EE providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understand the goals and objectives of the 21st CCLC program - know how to design and implement programs appropriate for partnerships with 21st CCLCs 	<p>EE providers continue to partner with 21st CCLC sites</p>	
		<p>21st CCLC site staff</p>	<p>21st CCLC site staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are more environmentally literate - have skills and confidence to incorporate environmental education into programming - value environmental education as a means to improve student performance in core academic subjects - have the pedagogical methods and content knowledge to implement MWEE components - know how environmental education may be used as means to meet education standards - have positive attitudes towards MWEEs (e.g., confidence to teach outdoors) - are aware of relevant NOAA resources to enhance student experiences 	<p>21st CCLC site staff continue to support environmental education programming and use NOAA resources</p>	

ABOUT THE NOAA B-WET PROGRAM

The NOAA B-WET program funds locally relevant, authentic experiential STEM learning for K-12 audiences through multi-stage Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) that include learning both outdoors and in the classroom. The activities are driven by rigorous academic learning standards and aim to increase participants' understanding and stewardship of watersheds and related ocean, coastal, riverine, estuarine, and Great Lakes ecosystems. The B-WET program currently serves seven geographic areas of the country: California, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Hawai'i, New England, and the Pacific Northwest. Regional implementation allows B-WET programs to support grantee capacity-building and to connect grantees to local NOAA assets and relevant STEM expertise, while being responsive to local education and environmental priorities. <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet>

ABOUT THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 21st CCLC PROGRAM

The 21st Century Community Learning Center program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21st_CCLC/index.html

DEFINITIONS

21st CCLC: 21st Century Community Learning Center site, funded by U.S. ED via state level grant competitions

21st CCLC students: Student participants in 21st CCLC programming, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools

21st CCLC site staff: Staff at 21st CCLC sites who will be offering, or assisting with, STEM experiences for students

B-WET: NOAA Bay-Watershed Education and Training Program

B-WET staff: National coordinator; Regional coordinators and associated staff and colleagues

Environmental education: The study of the relationships and interactions between dynamic natural and human systems. Environmental education:

- Includes learning in the field as well as the classroom
- Incorporates the teaching methods of:
 - **Outdoor education**
 - **Experiential learning** (Experiential education programs engage learners in constructing meaning by immersing them in direct and meaningful hands-on experiences. This experiential approach incorporates learning using real-world problems and interaction with natural phenomena.)
 - **Place-based education** (Immerses the learner in local heritage, culture, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects. This method of instruction encourages participants to use the schoolyard, community, public lands, and other special places as resources, turning communities into classrooms.)
- Is inherently interdisciplinary
- Promotes school/community partnerships
- Is hands-on, student-centered, inquiry driven, engages higher level thinking skills, and relevant to students' everyday lives
- Develops awareness, increases knowledge, builds skills, and creates the capacity for stewardship and good citizenship regarding the environment upon which we depend for life support.
- Boosts student achievement in math, science, reading, writing and social studies

Sources: No Child Left Inside Coalition definition of *environmental education* (<http://www.cbf.org/Page.aspx?pid=946>), NOAA Education Strategic Plan 2015-2035

(<http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/leadership/edcouncil/docs/2015-Strategic-Plan-FullText.pdf>), Association for Experiential Education (<http://www.aee.org/>), Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative definition

(http://www.peecworks.org/PEEC/Benefits_of_PBE-PEEC_2008_web.pdf)

Environmental Literacy: An environmentally literate person is someone who, both individually and together with others, makes informed decisions concerning the environment; is willing to act on these decisions to improve the well-being of other individuals, societies, and the global environment; and participates in civic life. Those who are environmentally literate possess, to varying degrees: the knowledge and understanding of a wide range of environmental concepts, problems, and issues; a set of cognitive and affective dispositions; a set of cognitive skills and abilities; and the appropriate behavioral strategies to apply such knowledge and understanding in order to make sound and effective decisions in a range of environmental contexts. Sources: Hollweg et al. 2011, NOAA Education Strategic Plan 2015-2035 (<http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/leadership/edcouncil/docs/2015-Strategic-Plan-FullText.pdf>)

EE providers: Environmental Education providers; B-WET grant recipients and partners, regional scale nonprofits, aquariums, science centers, etc. EE providers may apply to receive NOAA 21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Partnership Grant funding.

MWEE: Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience. MWEEs are multi-stage activities that include learning both outdoors and in the classroom, and aim to increase the environmental literacy of all participants. The MWEE is the core B-WET program experience and is based on research literature, evaluation results and lessons learned.

www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet-mwee.pdf