21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

- **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**
  - **Title IV**—21st Century Schools
    - **Part B**—21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

Funding Program Overview

Detailed information: http://www.ed.gov/21stcclc

Purpose and Background

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program is designed to provide opportunities for academic enrichment, particularly to students who attend low-performing schools, to meet state and local student academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers offer students a broad array of services, programs and activities, such as: tutorial services; youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; art, music and recreation programs; technology education programs; and character education programs. The services, programs and activities are provided during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before and after school or during summer recess) and are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

In addition, the centers offer opportunities for literacy and related educational development to families of participating students. About 6,800 rural and inner-city public schools in 1,420 communities -- in collaboration with other public and nonprofit agencies, organizations, local businesses, post-secondary institutions, scientific/cultural and other community entities -- are now participating as 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Funding and Eligibility

(Federal Appropriation Fiscal Year 2004: $999.0 million)

Funds flow to States based on their share of Title I, Part A funds. Eligible entities compete for grants awarded by the State. Eligible entities include local educational agencies, community-based organizations, other public or private entities, or consortia of two or more of such agencies, organizations or entities. States are required to make awards only to applicants that will primarily serve students who attend schools with concentrations of poor students. Also, States must provide a priority for projects that will target services to students who attend low-performing schools.

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Alignment of Choices to Requirements of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

Requirement: Comprehensive and high-quality information

Choices CD Edition is an interactive program that helps high school students focus on their academic career today and make plans for a smooth transition to a variety of post-secondary education and career options. *Choices* is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. The program motivates and engages students through interactive activities for:

- Self-assessment of interests (English and Spanish) and work values;
- Career and post-secondary education exploration;
- Four-year high school course planning;
- Career and education portfolio building; and
- Financial aid and scholarship resources and application.

Choices provides a seamless connection to thousands of college websites, America's Job Bank, state job banks, scholarship databases and other high-quality career sites. Students can apply to colleges online. Parents can complete college financial need forms and use tools to better understand the process of financing college costs.

Choices connects to more than 200 online career videos. They bring job information to life through real-world interviews with workers in the field. The videos show workers in action, giving a first-hand sense of what a career is really like. Students learn about required education/training and career skills, work activities, job outlook and earnings.

Requirement: Academic Integration

Choices also includes creative, outcome-based solutions for teaching established curricula. Lessons are designed to integrate career development concepts into the core academics. Many have an optional technology component and all have copy-ready worksheets. They are an excellent way to enrich academic learning.

Requirement: Accountability

The OnTrack accountability system provides counselors and administrators with data about *Choices* assessment results and progress with education and career planning for individual students or groups of students. OnTrack accountability data can be imported into applications such as Excel for further analysis and consolidation. Schools can also send OnTrack student information to parents and guardians quickly and easily, thus promoting parental involvement.

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Alignment of Choices to 21st Century Community Learning Centers Authorized Activities

Title IV—Part B
SEC. 4205. Local Activities

(a) Authorized Activities – Each eligible entity that receives an award under this part may use the award funds to carry out a broad array of before and after school activities (including during summer recess periods) that advance student academic achievement. *Choices* content and processes align most closely with the activities described below.

(1) Remedial education activities and academic enrichment learning programs, including providing additional assistance to students to allow the students to improve academic achievement.

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices content offers a wealth of opportunities for academic enrichment. For example, students might begin by taking an interest inventory that identifies career clusters and specific occupations of interest to the student. Follow-up reading about key occupations gives students practice in reading comprehension and exposes them to new vocabulary. Graphics and charts give students assistance in comprehension. The occupation reports further validate the importance of academic achievement by highlighting what school subjects relate to the skills required by the occupation. The *Choices* Planner and portfolio invite students to write descriptions of their skills through a guided process, create written education and career plans and practice resume writing.

The very nature of using *Choices* leads students to use many critical thinking skills. They must make decisions and set priorities when they search for occupations, colleges or scholarships. They are provided opportunities to compare options. They are encouraged to retrieve, evaluate and manage information.

The Bridges-to-Careers lessons give teachers yet another tool to enhance academic achievement. They blend career development concepts, the use of technology and academic skills into interesting lessons that engage students, build on their own context and motivate learning.

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(8) Telecommunications and technology education programs.

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices is an interactive program containing numerous databases, online assessments, online tutorials and an electronic portfolio. *Choices* also links to thousands of college websites, America's Job Bank, state job banks, scholarship databases and other high-quality career sites. Students can apply to colleges online.

Students using *Choices* gain experience in keyboarding skills, searching a database, taking online assessments, printing reports, using a word processor and browsing the Internet. *Choices* is an excellent way to reinforce and apply the skills learned in technology education.

(10) Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy.

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices promotes parental/guardian involvement in student career decision-making in several ways. Students can easily print their work from *Choices* and bring it home for review and discussion. Parents who visit the Community Learning Center will find that *Choices* is easy to use. They can learn more about the education and training requirements of specific occupations, explore post-secondary options with their students and review college financial aid possibilities.

Parents and students can work together on developing four-year high school course plans with the help of the *Choices* Planner. *Choices* can be of direct assistance to parents in their own career planning and/or job search, with connections to state job banks, help with interviewing and resume writing and transferable skills checklists.

Counselors and teachers can use *Choices* to generate letters to parents about career and educational planning for their students. They can also customize the four-year high school course plans (pathways) shown in *Choices* occupation reports to reflect local requirements, thus assuring that parents get accurate information.

(12) Drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs and character education programs.

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices can form the framework for solid education and career counseling that is outcome-based. *Choices* is a comprehensive, useful and concise tool that guides students through the career and education planning process and gives them immediate results. The program supports the efforts of counselors by providing resources for students in the areas of:

- Self-assessment (English and Spanish) and work values assessment;
- Career and post-secondary education information and exploration;
- Four-year high school course planning;
- Career and education portfolio building; and
- Financial aid and scholarship research and application.

Choices also provides a seamless connection to thousands of college websites, America's Job Bank, state job banks, scholarship databases and other high-quality career sites. Students can apply to colleges online. Parents can complete college financial need forms and use tools to better understand the process of financing college costs.

The *Choices* Planner and portfolio support student documentation of their employability skills, goal setting, the development of four-year high school course plans and transition planning for post-secondary options. The Planner and portfolio can provide an ongoing record of student plans and progress.

The OnTrack accountability system provides teachers, counselors and administrators with a way to review each student's *Choices* assessment results and progress with education and career planning. This tool helps counselors keep track of students' interests and keep them motivated. It is also a good vehicle for communicating information to parents and guardians quickly and easily.

Choices comes with extensive professional resources for counseling program implementation and a variety of counselor training opportunities to maximize the use of *Choices*.