



FY 2023 ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY



Report to the Governor
& General Assembly

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 600,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 48 colleges in 39 community college districts which provide high quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.

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Illinois Adult Education and Literacy: Fiscal Year 2023 Executive Summary

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System and administers Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The ICCB recognizes the importance of preparing residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. The emphasis on increased literacy, English Language Acquisition, career development, integrated educational pathways, and work-based training reflects a commitment to addressing the evolving demands of the 21st Century economy. The expansion and scale of comprehensive adult basic education programming, English language instruction that supports the influx of new arrivals and existing immigrants, and implementation of in-demand industry training led to adult learners meeting the changing demands of local and statewide business and industry priorities. During SFY2023, ICCB Adult Education programs enrolled more than 56,000 students in adult basic, secondary, and English language acquisition programs exceeding all performance targets negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education.

The purpose of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act under WIOA Title II is:

- To assist adults to become literate and to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.
- To assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills needed to become full partners in the educational development of their children and that lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families.
- To assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to post-secondary education and training, through career pathways.
- To assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English, mathematical skills, and acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Additionally, as a component of the Adult Education and Literacy Program, the ICCB oversees the Integrated English Language Acquisition and Civics Education program. The IELCE program is designed to prepare English Language Learners for, and to be placed in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency through integrating with the local workforce development system.



Investment in Adult Education

The ICCB led all Title II initiatives, serving adult education students working toward their high school credentials, expanding Bridge and ICAPS programming, providing English Language Acquisition and Civics instruction, Integrated English Language and Civics Education, and provided basic education services for justice-involved individuals in the Illinois Department of Corrections, county jails, and transitional housing programs.

The annual Index of Need, a research project with data inclusive of the United States Census and the American Community Survey, indicates over 1 million of 10.3 million Illinoisans over the age of 16 lack a High School Diploma. Included in this number are over 400,000 individuals over the age of 16 with less than a 9th grade education. The most recent data also include more than 2,840,525 individuals residing in households where English is not the primary language. English literacy and civics education provide individuals with pathways to citizenship and employment. Table 1 illustrates Illinois' investment in Adult Education and Literacy.

Table 1: FY2023 Adult Education and Literacy Resources Federal and State Funding	
Federal Basic	\$ 16,880,491
Federal IELCE	\$ 2,886,575
State Basic	\$23,783,600
State Performance	\$ 11,798,500
TOTAL	\$ 55,349,166

FY23 was the third year in a three-year Adult Education and Family Literacy Grant. To be selected for funding, applicants were required to demonstrate past effectiveness in providing adult education instruction with the goal of transitioning adult learners to postsecondary education, training, and into employment. The initial applicants documented need of individuals in their Area Planning Council who are most in need of literacy services and career pathway services, including individuals who have low literacy skills (i.e., literacy statistics, regional and local needs, etc.). Continuation of the grant was contingent on sufficient funding and submittal and approval of an official end-of-year report that includes a demonstration of adequate and effective performance in the prior year. Providers offer services in over 600 locations throughout the state and include:

- Community-Based Organizations (17)
- Community Colleges (38)
- Correction and Reentry-Focused Programs (3)
- Illinois Department of Corrections (1)
- Faith-based Organizations (3)
- Four-Year Colleges or University (1)
- Local Education Agencies (8)

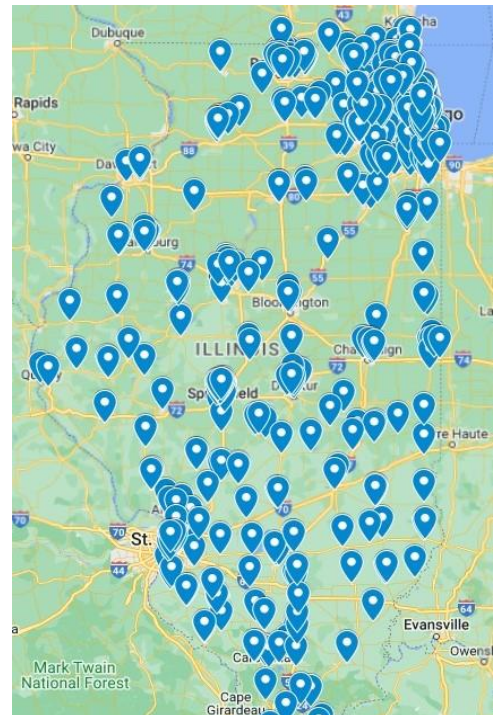


Image 1: AEL Program Locations in Illinois



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Title II—Adult Education Activities

The ICCB is the state-level entity responsible for Title II, a member of the state of Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), and is represented on all state-level major WIOA workgroups and committees. Title-II-funded providers fulfill membership responsibilities on each Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) by providing Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, High School Credit Recovery, English as a Second Language, and Vocational activities and services outlined in the Unified State Plan as well as the goals and strategies in the Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities in Adult Education Strategic Plan. The ICCB continues to work with other partners around service integration to reduce duplication and to ensure effective collaboration around the expansion and scaling of comprehensive career pathways in each local area.

The continuum of key AELA Services include:

- Adult Basic Education for learners at the most basic literacy levels.
- Adult Secondary Education to prepare learners for their High School Equivalency Certificate.
- English as a Second Language instruction.
- Integrated Education and Literacy / Civics instruction for English Language Learners.
- Bridge Programming for ABE learners to provide work-based contextualized instruction.
- College and career readiness instruction to prepare learners to transition to post-secondary education or training.
- Employability Skills instruction is embedded in all elements of Adult Education and Literacy instruction.
- Integrated Education and Training [through the ICCB’s Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS)] that blends adult education instruction and workforce training, leading to an industry recognized credential and community college certificates at those programs administered by the state’s community colleges.

Adult Education Enrollment and Performance

One of the key indicators of student success is the measurement of Education Functioning Levels. With the increase of instructional units, combined with the support for workforce preparation in integrated education and training programs, adult education programs (Title II) exceeded our WIOA Performance Targets.

Table 2: FY2023 Adult Education and Literacy Performance		
Performance Indicator	Actual Performance	Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter: Participants who exited programs were in unsubsidized employment during second quarter.	31.23%	26.9%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter: Participants who exited programs were in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter.	33.29%	27.5%
Median Earnings: The median earnings of program participants who were in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from program.	\$6,344.00	\$4,925.00



Credential Obtainment: Participants eligible to be included in this measure obtained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program.	31.50%	30.8%
Measurable Skill Gains: Participants who were in an education or training program achieved measurable skill gains toward a recognized postsecondary credential or employment or increased their Education Functioning Level.	40.38%	37.0%

Contributing to the increased Measurable Skill Gains is the 2,191 Adult Learners obtaining their Illinois High School Diploma. Adult Education providers are supported in their High School Equivalency instructional programming through technical assistance, access to the i-Pathways project (i-pathways.org) a web-based High School Equivalency Preparatory System available to all ICCB funded programs, and state facilitated outreach.

Enrollment Increases in FY23

Fiscal Year 2023 closed with a 33% increase of student enrollment compared to Fiscal Year 2022. The enrollment trend led to a 20% increase in Units of Instruction.

Table 3: Enrollment and Units of Instruction					
	Reimbursement Rate	FY22 Enrollment	FY23 Enrollment	FY22 Units Of Instruction ²	FY23 Units Of Instruction ²
ABE	\$101.98	10,525	10,891	110,128.14	104,003.76
ASE	\$ 91.78	5,629	5,653	54,591.17	49,832.55
ESL	\$101.98	24,057	37,646	231,727.15	329,112.54
HSCR	\$ 91.78	1,628	1,637	30,008.96	31,316.94
VOC	\$127.48	592	627	4,713.76	4,494.77
TOTAL		42,431	56,454	431,169.16	518,760.56

² One unit of instruction equals 15 hours of enrollment.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)

WIOA authorized and codified the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program in 2016. In an IELCE Program, literacy, English language acquisition, and civics education must be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities, accommodating services for professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. The ICCB continued to provide guidance, research, professional development, and technical assistance to

IELCE funded adult education programs to ensure the state IELCE services are meeting the guidelines of WIOA 243 regulations.



As required with this funding, local providers were required to address all components of the IELCE funding- English Language Instruction, contextualized instruction for the workplace, civics education, and provide learner access to Integrated Education and Training.

The state has a comprehensive list of IELCE competencies that are required components of the instruction and designed to ensure participants develop the skills needed to function effectively as workers and citizens. Professional development on integrating competencies in the instruction is ongoing and includes support through virtual learning communities, asynchronous instruction in the State’s Adult Education learning portal, iLEARN, and IELCE Logic Model published on the Professional Development’s website, Excellence in Adult Education.

IELCE programming continued to grow in FY23, climbing to 33 IELCE providers and reaching 3,929 students, with 88.37% achieving the competency requirement.

Partnership with the Illinois High School Equivalency Program



In addition to adult education and literacy programming, the ICCB manages high school equivalency testing for Illinois. FY2023 began with SB3792 signed into law, officially amending all reference to high school equivalency certificates to the State of Illinois High School Diploma.

Building on the change in name, Illinois Adult Education and High School Equivalency divisions partnered on the GED 3 of 4 Campaign, reengaging thousands of adult learners and encouraging them to complete their High School Diploma, particularly those who have passed all but one of the four tests. This support contributed to the increased Measurable Skill Gains with 2,191 Adult Learners obtaining their Illinois High School Diploma.

Adult Education providers are supported in their High School Equivalency instructional programming through technical assistance, access to the i-Pathways project (i-pathways.org) a web-based High School Equivalency Preparatory System available to all ICCB funded programs, and state facilitated outreach.

Response to the Influx of Immigrants, Asylees, and Refugees

As of this report, Illinois has seen an estimated 24,400 individuals arriving in the Chicagoland Area via busses from other states. This number does not include individuals arriving independently. While tens of thousands of new arrivals are entering the United States at the Southern Border, the increase in immigrant arrivals also includes those arriving from Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

The sharp increase in new arrivals, in conjunction with a national teacher and critical worker shortage, has posed unique challenges. For example, one Chicagoland community college had a 320% increase in English Language Learners since FY21. Specifically, two Chicagoland community-based organizations focusing on immigrant resettlement saw an increase of 277% increase in English Language Learners at the lowest English level from FY21 to FY23. Newly arrived immigrants are entering local programs at a much lower fluency level, lacking work authorization, and in drastically increasing numbers – challenging programs in the delivery of services as this influx is intersecting with a national teacher and critical staff shortage.

The ICCB Division of Adult Education coordinated Adult Education and English Language Acquisition services with the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education to ensure new immigrant arrivals had access to adult education services. Furthermore, the ICCB supported funded Adult Education and Literacy programs in the development and delivery of educational services through guiding the Professional Development Network’s approach to technical assistance, focusing on evidence-based approaches to instruction and support services.

Tens of thousands of adult learners had positive outcomes from participating in AEFLA programs. Vanessa, an immigrant from El Salvador, joined Heartland Community College Adult Education offered English as a Second Language classes. She worked very hard in her ESL classes and moved on to Academic English Language Program (AELP). She also found a job at The Organic Cleaning Machine and was able to schedule her work hours around her class times. Vanessa persevered when the pandemic struck and continued with AELP classes online. After graduating from AELP program, Vanessa enrolled in high School Equivalency classes with Adult Education. In May of 2023, Vanessa completed her GED exam for a high school diploma and earned her Bookkeeping Certificate.



Cleaning houses is no longer Vanessa’s job at the Organic Cleaning Machine. Now she works in the bookkeeping area and handles the payroll. Her plan is to attend Illinois State University to earn a BA in Accounting.

Workforce Preparation

The ICCB continues to lead and support the development of work-based educational programs for the most vulnerable Illinois residents. Using key labor and market trends, the Workforce Education Division, comprised of Workforce Development, Adult Education and Literacy, and Career and Technical Education worked collaboratively to expand Illinois’ talent pipeline and provide adult learners with opportunities to improve their academic, English language, and workplace skills. The ever-changing employer and workforce scenario provides the rationale for the ICCB to develop and expand the Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) that accelerate and connect adult literacy instruction with workforce training leading to industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credentials and, in turn, meaningful employment. Bridge Programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to explore various career opportunities in focused areas while continuing to build academic and English skills.





These programs are essential for our adult learners like Nauciana, a 17-year-old student who earned her Illinois High School Diploma at Heartland Community College and is now taking credit classes toward a Construction Skills Certificate. She is looking forward to working in this field and hopefully owning her own construction company someday. Her advice to anyone who’s thinking about taking high school equivalency classes is “YES! DO IT!! Everyone in this program has helped me tremendously. I’m so happy to have learned about and participated in the Complete and Connect program through Heartland’s Adult Education department.”

In FY23, 14 additional bridge programs were approved bringing the overall number up to 200 approved Bridge Programs. The two areas of largest growth were in Health Science and Hospitality and Tourism, which reflect the increased job demands across the state of Illinois over the past year.

Table 4: Integrated Education and Training Programs		
Career Pathway	No. Programs FY22	No. Programs FY23
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	0	1
Architecture and Construction	5	7
Business Management and Administration	5	5
Education and Training	4	5
Finance	0	1
Health Science	48	59
Hospitality and Tourism	3	6
Information Technology	16	25
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	1	1
Manufacturing	34	34
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	13	17
TOTAL	129	161

The number of ICAPS programs increased for the following reasons:

- **Annual Transitions Academy**, convening in the Fall with ongoing professional development and technical assistance for ICAPS and Bridge Programming throughout the year:
 - Focus areas include, but were not limited to, teacher recruitment, curriculum design, implementation suggestions, lessons learned, approval processes, braided funding, how to scale across a program locally or state-wide.
 - Ongoing Virtual Learning Communities where practitioners share best practices.



- **ICAPS Office Hours** - a monthly opportunity for programs to reach out with questions about processes, policies, implementation, expectations, etc.
- **Cohort Convos**, convening in late Fall to help local program leaders in both Adult Education and Literacy and Career and Technical Education have a focused and support time to plan and build their ICAPS programs.
 - An example of the outcomes from the ongoing support can be found in the partnership of Regional Office of Education #33 and Carl Sandburg College where two automotive ICAPS and a CNA ICAPS were developed to support both adult learners and local employers through the implementation of instructional programming that creates a skilled workforce and improved talent pipeline.

Fiscal Year 2023 also saw an increase in Workplace Literacy Programs, a response to specific employer needs where Adult Education and Literacy Programs partner with participating employers to provide combined literacy and job embedded instruction at employer work sites.

FY24 Adult Education Initiatives

The Illinois Community College Board led a statewide Adult Education outreach campaign in Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 to improve awareness about adult education programs and services. Building on the success of this campaign, the ICCB will launch a new outreach campaign, Behind Every Employer to raise awareness among employers about the many ways they can engage with adult education and other community college training offerings. Components of the campaign include:

- Developing an Illinois-specific webpage containing a contact form to capture employer leads interested in the service offerings of the Illinois Community College System.
- Developing digital advertising to drive employers to the campaign website, earned media to increase awareness, and a toolkit and professional development to support participants with cutting edge strategies to engage employers locally.
- Engaging an Advisory Committee led by practitioners in the field.

Additional initiatives for adult education include continuing to increase student enrollment, increasing the diversity of workplace and work-based learning, and increasing student outcomes through retention and persistence initiatives. This will occur through comprehensive professional development and technical assistance for programs at the local level.

