FY2023 ICCB PATH Program FAQ

Updated 8.30.23

1. **Q: Is the source of PATH funding federal or state?**

   A: State. Funds for the PATH program were made available through the State of Illinois FY2023 budget. Funding in subsequent years is subject to annual appropriation by the General Assembly.

2. **Q: What is the specific source of the data used to create completion targets?**

   A: The data derive from ICCB's Centralized Data System. Specifically, the data are captured from annually submitted student-level information by each community college in the ICCB Annual Completions (A2) submission (for Academic Year 2020). Completions from these data are only reflective of credit-bearing programs. Please keep in mind that districts may meet their completion target with non-credit program completions in eligible PATH programs. Eligible non-credit programs must culminate in an industry-recognized credential (e.g. certificate, certification- aligning with licensure as appropriate) and be approved by the ICCB per the Program Offerings Chart.

3. **Q: Is there a specific way institutions should allocate funds across weighted or non-weighted programs?**

   A: No, institutions have the latitude to allocate and expend funds in a way that makes the most sense for their district based on need or priority. Institutions should be creative in expending dollars in order to create capacity for the anticipated growth in students. Additionally, this program is modeled after the Workforce Equity Initiative, so it is expected that students will be provided with comprehensive wraparound support services.

4. **Q: Can PATH funding support non-credit programs?**

   A: Yes, PATH funding can support non-credit programs. Eligible PATH programs are listed within the Program Design. These programs may be credit or non-credit. Institutions must identify each program, both credit and non-credit, in the Program Offerings Chart. *ICCB staff will review this list to ensure it aligns with the eligible CIPs and provide approval for each individual program.*

5. **Q: Who can be counted as a completer for the purposes of this grant?**

   A: Students are considered completers for the purposes of this grant if they complete an eligible PATH program in the academic year for which the grant is active. Completion

means a student has completed a program that culminates in an industry-recognized credential (e.g. certificate, certification, degree, aligning with licensure as appropriate).

- The count may be duplicated meaning, for example, that if a student completes a 16-week program in the fall semester and then transitions into another eligible program in the spring semester and completes, the student would be counted for two completions.
- The count will include students completing both credit and non-credit programs, that are on the eligible program list. All programs must be identified in the Program Offerings Chart for approval by the ICCB.
- Completers may include students who began a program prior to the academic year for which the grant is being implemented. The grant program supports districts to implement activities that improve student retention.

6. **Q: How should the PATH program interact with my institution's current Workforce Equity Initiative program?**

   A: The PATH program is modeled after the WEI program, broadening the target student populations eligible to participate (e.g. first-generation students, students of color, low-income students) while focusing solely on the healthcare career field. The PATH program can have strong collaboration with an institution's WEI program and should not be seen as competition with an institution's WEI program.

7. **Q: Are stipends for students allowable costs under the grant?**

   A: Yes, stipends and other forms of financial assistance may be offered to students with financial barriers to participating in eligible programs. Stipends may be granted to students to cover expenses related to their participation in the program. Any financial assistance offered through this grant should be done so by first exhausting other financial aid resources (Pell, MAP, etc.), when applicable.

8. **Q: If students are offered a stipend or support through this grant program, will this assistance affect Cost of Attendance?**

   A: Most eligible support costs can be a part of cost of attendance (as determined by ISAC). A stipend can be used in support of costs of attendance or after all other supports are exhausted but may be taxable. This guidance does not supersede any federal and state financial aid regulations or guidance, and institutions are encouraged to direct any aid-related questions to the appropriate governing bodies.

9. **Q: What other student-related costs are allowable under this grant?**

   A:
   - transportation assistance (gas cards, bus passes, mileage reimbursement)

- childcare (on or off campus)
- housing
- food
- required pre-admission costs, such as titer tests, drug testing, CPR certification, fingerprinting and criminal background check
- tuition and fee balance forgiveness

10. Q: What students can be supported by PATH funding?

A: All students who are enrolled in any eligible PATH program can be supported by PATH funding. This includes students who entered the program prior to AY2023 as well as dual credit students. The level to which a student can be financially supported should be dependent on their need for financial resources (see Question #14 for additional clarification). However, the institution may consider broadening its ability to reduce costs to all students through textbook and supply loan libraries.

11. Q: Can PATH funds support continuing education units?

A: No.

12. Q: Can PATH funds pay for construction/renovation costs?

A: Yes, construction and capital improvements are allowable under this grant as long as it is directly related to the purpose of this grant and is integral to capacity-building or expansion efforts in order to accommodate more students in PATH eligible programs. Districts must seek prior approval from the ICCB on all capital improvements utilizing PATH funding.

13. Q: Can grant funds be used for advertising to support student outreach?

A: Yes.

14. Q: What is the definition for low-income status?

A: Students may be able to demonstrate financial need through a variety of ways. Federal Pell eligibility is one way an institution may determine financial need of a student. Pell eligibility cannot be the only means of determination considering students would have had to complete the FAFSA. Other ways of determining financial need may be through documentation of public benefits (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid), tax returns, etc.

15. **Q: Does my institution have to take the full percentage available through our Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate for indirect costs?**

    A: If a Grantee receiving a State of Illinois award voluntarily chooses to waive indirect costs or charges less than their negotiated indirect cost rate, State awarding agencies and pass-through entities can allow this. The decision must be made solely by the Grantee or subrecipient that is eligible for indirect cost reimbursement.

16. **Q: Are we expected to have 15% growth in each eligible PATH program?**

    A: No. The completion target was set with the intention that the district would have an overall and cumulative 15% growth in completions in PATH-eligible programs. This means that each district may focus on building capacity for a select few PATH eligible programs instead of all, based on program need. The ICCB has identified 7 programs as priority, based on labor market need statewide. While we encourage concerted efforts to grow these programs, not every district has these programs nor the same level of labor market demand.

17. **Q**: **Can a student who is not enrolled in a healthcare program, but that is taking prerequisite courses, receive PATH funding?**

    A: No, a student who is not enrolled in a healthcare program cannot receive PATH funding.

18. **Q: Can a student who is not an Illinois resident receive support through PATH funds?**

    A: If a student receives **direct** support from PATH funds (i.e. tuition assistance, stipends, etc), then the student must either be an Illinois resident or an incumbent worker who is employed by an Illinois healthcare facility. Any student, regardless of residency, may receive indirect support through the PATH program such as tutoring, use of equipment or supplies purchased with PATH funding, etc.