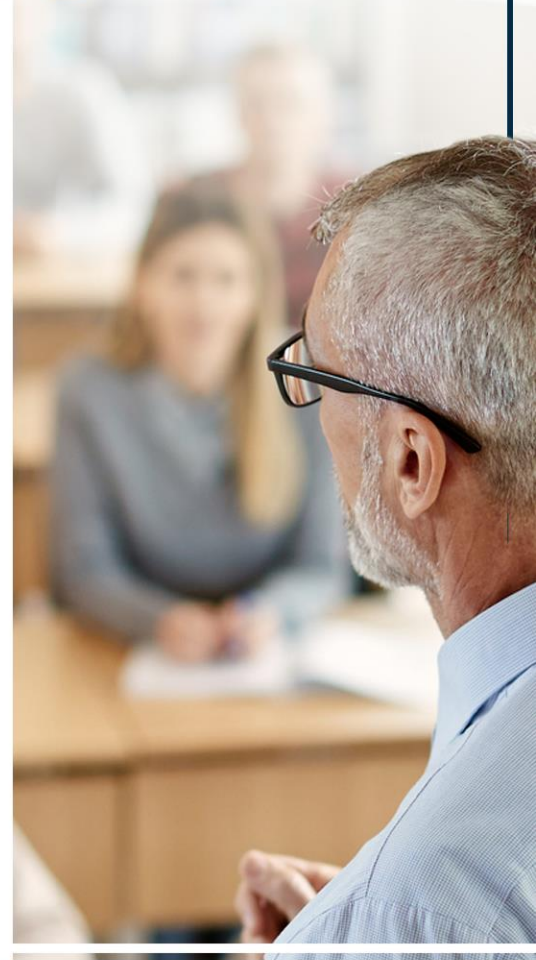
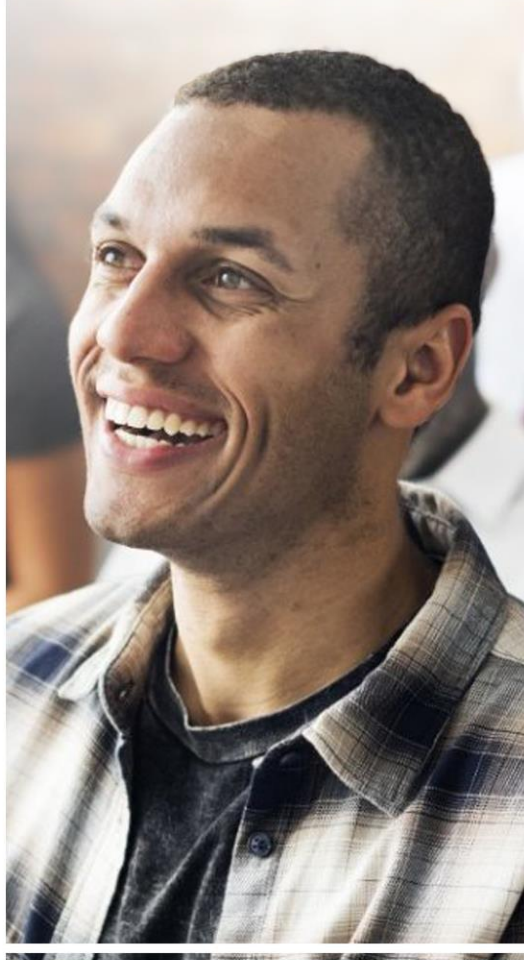




FY 2024 ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY



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 2024 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 SFY2024, ICCB Adult Education programs enrolled 63,830 students in adult basic, secondary, and English language acquisition programs. Along with the enrollment increases, Illinois has continued to improve in Measurable Skill Gains through the implementation of high-quality instruction, improved data practices, and ongoing technical assistance

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.

Adult education and literacy enrollment demonstrated a consistent and upward trend since SFY 2021 with a 13.97% increase in enrollment between State Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024.



Investment in Adult Education

The ICCB led all Title II initiatives, serving adult education students working toward their high school credentials, expanding Bridge and Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System programming, providing English Language Acquisition and Civics instruction, supporting and guiding Integrated English Language and Civics Education programming, expanding workplace literacy programming, and providing basic education services for justice-involved individuals in the Illinois Department of Corrections, county jails, and transitional housing programs. Table 1 illustrates Illinois' investment in Adult Education and Literacy.

Table 1: FY2024 Adult Education and Literacy Resources Federal and State Funding	
Federal Basic	\$ 20,847,863.00
Federal IELCE	\$ 3,864,660.00
State Basic	\$ 23,483,600.00
State Performance	\$ 11,798,500.00
TOTAL	\$ 59,994,623.00

The annual Index of Need, a research project using data from the United States Census and the American Community Survey, identified 1,378,951 Illinois residents at risk with 403,256 individuals over 16 who are reading at less than a 9th grade level and 538,356 residents who are reading above 9th grade but lack a High School Diploma

SFY24 was the final year in a multi-year Adult Education and Family Literacy and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education 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 following program types were funded in SFY24.

- 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)

In the Spring of SFY24, a competition was held for both AEFLA and IELCE programming. Eligible applicants were required to meet demonstrated effectiveness in prior adult education service. The AEFLA grant cycle includes SFY25 and SFY26. The IELCE grant cycle is from SFY25 through SFY28. Continuation of these grants are 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.



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 met the WIOA Performance Targets.

Table 2: FY2024 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.	24.80%	27.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter: Participants who exited programs were in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter.	27.89%	27.6%
Median Earnings: The median earnings of program participants who were in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from program.	\$6,974.00	\$4,829.00



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.	35.76%	30.9%
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.	43.39%	37.10%

Contributing to the increased Measurable Skill Gains reported to the United States Department of Education is the 2,780 adult learners obtaining their Illinois High School Diploma. This is a 26% increase from State Fiscal Year 2023. Adult Education providers are supported in their High School Equivalency instructional programming and High School Credit Recovery programming through technical assistance from the Professional Development Network, 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.

Additionally, in SFY24, 100% of adult learners in the Second Quarter Employment identified at least one barrier to employment. Using the State Performance Report from the State Adult Education Data System, the increased number of adult learners identifying barriers to employment as displaced homemakers, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, and single parents are also notable.

Table 3: FY2024 Adult Education and Literacy Barriers to Employment			
	SFY22	SFY23	SFY24
Displaced Homemakers	616	867	968
Ex-offenders	1,015	1,333	1,667
Long-term unemployed	814	825	1,060
Single parents	2,671	3,001	3,143

Strategies to assist Illinois in meeting and exceeding Performance Outcomes include working our core partners with the Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) partners on barrier reduction. Additionally, we have exceeded the Measurable Skill Gain and Credential Attainment targets through implementing comprehensive technical assistance through the annual NRS Institute that supports improved data practices at the local level, the annual year-long Transition Academy which provides time for peer to peer sharing of promising practices along with State guidance.

Enrollment and Units of Instruction for SFY24

State Fiscal Year 2024 continued the three year increased enrollment trend and closed with a 13% increase of student enrollment compared to State Fiscal Year 2023 and led to a 13% increase in Units of Instruction.



Table 4: Enrollment and Units of Instruction

	Reimbursement Rate for FY24	SFY23 Enrollment	SFY24 Enrollment	SFY23 Units of Instruction ²	SFY24 Units of Instruction ²
ABE	\$136.39	10,891	11,613	104,003.76	111,631.75
ASE	\$122.75	5,653	6,487	49,832.55	59,680.66
ESL	\$136.39	37,646	43,796	329,112.54	381,103.36
HSCR	\$122.75	1,637	1,498	31,316.94	30,071.15
VOC	\$170.49	627	233	4,494.77	3,935.77
TOTAL		56,454	63,830	518,760.56	586,422.69

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 access to Integrated Education and Training. Together, 33 IELCE funded programs throughout the state served 3,996 English learners.

In SFY24, the ICCB facilitated a statewide IELCE Institute, sharing promising practices for program delivery, bringing in experts from the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education and ICCB leadership, and members of the Professional Development Institute. In May of 2024, Illinois Adult Education staff were invited participants OCTAE's Enhancing Access for Refugees and New Americans (EARN) Convening to share Illinois' model of effective leadership.

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 provide 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. Adult education programs are supported through the following strategies:

- **Annual Transitions Academy**, convening in the Fall with ongoing professional development and technical assistance for ICAPS and Bridge Programming throughout the year.
- **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.

State Fiscal Year 2024 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.

One funded community-based organization, World Relief, partners with over 200 different regional employers to hire their adult English learners. In SFY24, they placed 300+ English Language Learners into employment using a work-based literacy program, the Workforce Readiness Bridge. They project serving over 400 immigrants in SFY25.



World Relief students participating in a field trip to Feed My Starving Children to practices packing, weighing, and other workplace skills while giving back to their local community.



Through this process, World Relief collect local employers' needs for contextualized language and skills, and then integrate those skills into a 6-week, rolling enrollment class. Each week focused on critical U.S. workplace language and skills development, integrating hands-on practice (e.g. assembly line and quality control exercises, etc.) and project-based learning (resume creation, interview skills practice, calling in sick, digital timecard reporting, etc.). In addition to core skills for the workplace which included cultural and digital literacy skills, the program integrated trauma-informed instructional practices to provide tools to navigate stress-triggers on the job to avoid trauma responses. These trauma-informed services included interpreted mental health counseling presentations, interpreted career navigation, and interpreted success coaching.

All newly arrived refugees and asylees take this class; upon completion of the bridge, the students immediately start their first jobs in the United States. The class covers everything an onsite workplace literacy program covers and potentially more because it's curated for more than one employer and has upskilling in mind. The program is available in-person with transportation, hybrid, fully remote, and in an asynchronous format. The fully remote and asynchronous options include a hotspot and iPad for loan, as well as instructional support, 1:1 success coach sessions and transitions navigation.

Focus on SFY25

In SFY24, the ICCB and Title II programs focused on establishing Workplace Literacy programming throughout the state. Specifically, workplace literacy combines either foundational skill instruction or English language acquisition with contextualized employer related skill instruction aligned with the set of skills employees need to be successful at their jobs. Adult Education Programs and business partnerships include the following:

- *City Colleges of Chicago (Wright College):* Eli's Cheesecake Factory
- *College of DuPage:* Victor Envelope, Bensenville; Now Health Group, Bloomindale; Devanco Foods, Carol Stream; United Business Mail, Itasca; The CH Hanson Company, Naperville; and Champion Packaging, Woodridge
- *Kaskaskia College:* Swan and Butcher Engineering
- *Kishwaukee Community College:* Suter Company in Sycamore
- *Lake Land College:* CHI Overhead Doors, Arthur; Graphic Packaging International, Shelbyville
- *Literacy Chicago:* Revolution Workshop; UNITE HERE, Local 1 Union
- *McHenry County College:* Amazon in Huntly
- *Mundelein High School District #120:* D&W Fine Pack; Termax, and Smalley
- *Parkland College:* Carle Hospital in Urbana
- *Regional Office of Education #33:* Smithfield Foods, Monmouth
- *Triton College:* Dynamic Manufacturing
- *Waubensee Community College:* NEUCO (HVAC Manufacturer), Freudenberg Household Products, and General Mills

In SFY25, the ICCB will continue to focus on the development of workplace literacy programming, utilizing the Behind Every Employer – Illinois campaign. This digital campaign is designed to connect employers with Adult Education programming to improve the talent pipeline and create sustainable employee pathways.

