



## **Fiscal Year 2021**

### **Innovative Bridge and Transition Program Grant Application Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**Application Due Date/Time:** September 24, 2020  
**Submit Application To:** [nora.l.rossman@illinois.gov](mailto:nora.l.rossman@illinois.gov)

## **A. Background and Purpose**

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is inviting eligible applicants to apply for the Innovative Bridge and Transition Program Grants. The ICCB will provide approximately \$4.1 million in grant funding opportunities to be administered to support innovative bridge and transition programs.

The purpose of this grant is to:

- create, support, or expand innovative bridge programs and services;
- support or create transition programs which improve student transitions to and through postsecondary education and into employment;
- create programs that promote equity and diversity among those served; and/or
- create programs and services that support individuals with disabilities.

## **B. Eligible Applicants**

The ICCB is inviting eligible applicants listed below to submit proposals under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The eligible applicants are as follows:

- Institutions of higher education
- Community-based organizations
- Local education agencies
- Public or private nonprofit agencies
- Comprehensive rehabilitation facilities associated with a university or institutions of higher education
- Other applicants of demonstrated effectiveness in serving the eligible service population

Successful applicants must be the provider of the direct services; however, applicants may subcontract for supportive services that enhance program services or reduce barriers for eligible participants. Subcontracting is subject to ICCB approval.

## **C. Target Population**

This grant is intended to provide services to targeted populations identified below. The intent of the grant is to serve individuals who are at least 16 years of age or older, and prepare:

- **adults who are not enrolled in high school** with limited academic or basic skills, underemployed or unemployed to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to employment in high skill, high wage, and in-demand occupations; and/or
- **youth who are in-school** to transition into postsecondary education or training programs following graduation. **Serving in-school youth is an allowable activity; only if the services to this population prepares them to enter into postsecondary education and training following graduation.**

## **D. Grant Objectives**

The objectives of this grant are intended to provide career pathway opportunities to the targeted population to be served. These include programs and services that utilize one or more of the following activities:

- Create new or expand bridge, integrated education and training, or transition program instruction which may include contextualized basic reading, math, and language skills, industry/occupation knowledge, or life skills.
- Develop career activities which may include career development and exploration, career planning within a career area, understanding the world of work, and essential skills.
- Utilize transition/wrap-around services which provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs, or from credit or occupational programs to the workforce. Services may include academic advising, career pathway navigation, tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services (e.g., basic needs including housing, transportation, and child care).
- Engage in partnerships with other entities that may strengthen the ability of students to persist through the education and training provided. Partners may include community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, advocacy groups, local one-stops, and employers, among others.
- Create partnerships to seamlessly transition students from community college to public universities.
- Create comprehensive programming for individuals with disabilities that provides vocational, psychological counseling, transitional and educational services, and job placement activities in order for them to live and work independently in the community.

## **E. Example Program Activities**

The expectation is that applicants will propose activities that will align with statewide priorities around [career pathway](#) opportunities and activities that promote equity and diversity. Key definitions are included at the end of the NOFO. Applicants may develop or expand programming to align with priority sectors as identified in their local or regional WIOA plans including but not limited to work-based learning activities. These activities may include but are not limited to:

- Developing or Aligning Curriculum: Furthering the alignment of coursework by contextualizing and integrating basic skills or academic and career and technical education offerings.
- Creating career pathway activities for those youth in their senior year of high school that smooth their transition into postsecondary education or to a training program.
- Creating short-term training programs that support minority students' transition into postsecondary education and employment.
- Developing African American History programs that teach cultural awareness and historical perspectives.
- Developing an American History curriculum that teaches cultural awareness and gives an accurate account of history for k-12 in Illinois.
- Creation of programs and services that assists individuals with disabilities (i.e., those who are on the autism spectrum) to access educational services that will help support their independence and reduce barriers to their success.
- Creating a high demand dual credit program from high school to postsecondary education.
- Developing an integrated education and training program that allows those who are basic skill deficient to earn industry recognized or college credentials, college credit, and credits toward an in demand occupation.
- Expanding or developing models that link participants in adult education programs including all provider types and to community colleges.
- Developing models that promote service integration with partner programs.
- Developing a bridge program in an in demand sector.
- Working with employers to develop a career pathway program that is designed for incumbent workers.
- Developing a process for using prior learning assessment to evaluate and grant credit for prior learning.
- Developing a student support center model that will enhance services to underrepresented populations.
- Creating support services models/toolkits that will reduce barriers to populations and enhance their educational success.
- Expanding bridge to include an innovative support services program to ensure student success in progressing to and through postsecondary education.
- Engaging employers in the development of an apprenticeship program for adults in a high demand sector.
- Enhancing or developing institutional career pathways. Applicants may engage in career pathway development, alignment, and/or evaluation activities to ensure the inclusion of multiple entry and exit points, rigorous and integrated content, or focus on strengthening components which make up a successful bridge or transition program (i.e., integrated education and training program development, curriculum alignment, stackable credentials).

- Developing work-based learning or apprenticeship models.
- Developing support services models that include wrap-around services for basic needs including but not limited to housing, financial literacy, and other services that will reduce barriers to educational success for all students including those who are homeless and those individuals with disabilities.
- Developing comprehensive programs and services for those with disabilities that provide assessment of work strengths, abilities and limitations through an evaluation process which may include but not limited to interviews, testing and observation. These services may consist of providing living center programming such as life skills including budgeting, meal preparation, job placement into compatible competitive employment, professional training and research, driver's rehabilitation services, essential work skills with an emphasis on employer expectations, and other daily living skills that offer residents an opportunity to live and learn new skills and work toward personal independence.
- Other activities of statewide significance that expands career pathways and is aligned with labor market information as identified by local or regional needs.

## **F. Application Package**

**THIS IS A COMPETITIVE PROCESS.** All parts of the application package must be completed by the deadline in order to be considered. Applicants will receive a receipt of application. However, applicants will not be notified if there are items that are missing from their application. Applicants must use the templates provided. The application must be organized as listed below.

### 1. Uniform Application

Applicants must complete each section of the Uniform Application in its entirety. If a question is not applicable, please enter NA.

### 2. Cover Page

The cover page must include the institution's name, address, telephone number, website, as well as the contact information including email address, telephone number and extension, and fax number of the President/CEO, Chief Financial Officer, and Project Coordinator/Administrator.

The cover page must also provide a statement that stipulates: "This application is being submitted on behalf of the <institution's name>; and, if awarded, the applicant agrees to abide by the provisions and guidelines set forth in the application and by the ICCB. Furthermore, the individuals listed in the application are authorized to act on behalf of the institution."

**The statement must be signed and dated by the President/Chief Executive Officer (CEO).**

### 3. Abstract

Provide a two-page (or less) abstract which summarizes your project activities. This may be single spaced and describes the following as organized below:

- Organization summary
- Summary of the project activities and how they align with the goals of the Innovative Bridge and Transition grant.
- Communities proposed to be served
- Target population (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, educational/workforce levels)
- Projected number of unduplicated individuals to be served
- Measureable Goals and Objective (listing)

4. Application Narrative

The eligible applicant must submit a narrative of no more than eight pages (charts and graphs are a part of the page limitation), double-spaced, 12 point type that must include the following information in the order listed below:

- Statement of Need including a description of the target population of students to be served including a breakdown (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, educational levels—high school equivalency/GED, workforce status, etc.)
- Projected unduplicated number of individuals to be served
- Detail the targeted sectors, if applicable
- Detailed description of the project including the measurable project goals and objectives (Note that goals and objectives must be measurable.)
- Description of any partnerships and the role of each partner
- Project timeline of activities including how the activities will help to achieve the grant project goals
- Description of the impact of the project on students, the community, the institution, employers, etc.
- Description of the scalability and replicability of the project
- Description of the applicant's capacity to execute the project including a description of previous experience in implementing successful Bridge or Transition Programs and related activities such as wrap-around services for the target population
- Description of the applicant's plan to sustain the project

The Application Narrative submitted under this NOFO should be organized, clear and understandable.

5. Uniform Budget

All applicants must submit an effective budget on the State of Illinois Uniform Grant Budget Template. Applicants should submit budgets based upon the total estimated costs for the project. The applicant organization should refer to 2 CFR 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards" cited within the template's instructions.

Be detailed and specific in completing the budget. Budget items must follow the guidelines set forth in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

Funds will be awarded based upon the number of proposed students and total dollar amount being requested.

6. Application/Submission Information

Each grant application package must be submitted no later than Thursday, September 24, 2020. CST to [nora.l.rossman@illinois.gov](mailto:nora.l.rossman@illinois.gov). Grant application and materials may be found on the ICCB website at <https://www.iccb.org/iccb/grant-opportunities/>.

A bidder's conference will be held at the following locations and times. Applicants may choose to attend one of the following Bidder's conferences. Bidder's conference attendance is not mandatory. See sessions below.

- September 1, 2020

Virtual Webinar

**11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

<https://illinois2.webex.com/webappng/sites/illinois2/meeting/download/afb18d747db6449e92f1c000769bf955?siteurl=illinois2&MTID=meba3deca99da5e1cbe0fcd91be629925>

**JOIN MEETING**

- September 3, 2020

Virtual Webinar

**9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

<https://illinois2.webex.com/webappng/sites/illinois2/meeting/download/fc33f0c428104361a7b3f054f6a9ecd8?siteurl=illinois2&MTID=m3b7c02b4e6a455062d5282b48f494b31>

**JOIN MEETING**

All questions must be submitted electronically to [nora.l.rossman@illinois.gov](mailto:nora.l.rossman@illinois.gov). Phone calls will not be accepted. Include in the

subject line: **[Institution's Name]** Innovative Bridge and Transition Program. All questions will be posted in a FAQ on the ICCB website.

Paper copies are not permitted. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt of the e-mail containing the attachments. It is up to the applicant to ensure that all items in the package are attached and sent in the e-mail.

All applicants, funded or not funded, will be notified by Wednesday, September 30, 2020.

## **G. Grant Accountability (GATA)**

Interested institutions may apply for a grant but will not be eligible for a grant award until the institution has pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal located at [www.grants.illinois.gov](http://www.grants.illinois.gov).

During pre-qualification, Dun and Bradstreet verifications are performed including a check of Debarred and Suspended status and good standing with the Secretary of State. The prequalification process also includes a financial and administrative risk assessment utilizing an Internal Controls Questionnaire.

If applicable, the entity will be notified that it is ineligible for award as a result of the Dun and Bradstreet verification. The entity will be informed of corrective action needed to become eligible for a grant award.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110 (d)) is required to:

- Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. If you are not registered in SAM, this link provides a connection for SAM registration: <https://governmentcontractregistration.com/sam-registration.asp>.
- Provide a valid DUNS number in its application.
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award.

ICCB will not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has fully complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements.

Grant recipients must comply with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and equal employment.

## **H. Funding Information**

Grant Period:

The grant period is from October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

### **Funding Availability:**

A total of \$4,194,400.00 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the ICCB for grants to eligible entities for the educational purposes as outlined under this NOFO. Only one grant application per institution. In addition, of the amount appropriated a total of \$800,000 will be set aside for small grants of less than \$100,000.00.

Recipients are not eligible to renew or extend existing grant-funded projects but may supplement or scale current initiatives.

### **Funding Deadlines**

- Grant funds must be obligated by September 30, 2021
- Good/products must be ordered by September 30, 2021/received by November 30, 2021
- Services must be rendered by September 30, 2021
- Grant funds must be expended by November 30, 2021

### **Cost Sharing or Matching**

- No cost sharing or matching is required.

### **Indirect Cost Rate**

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRA's.

- Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. ICCB will accept the federally negotiated rate.
- State Negotiated Rate. The organization must negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have a Federally Negotiated Rate or elect to use the De Minimis Rate. The indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted to the State of Illinois within 90 days of the notice of award.
- De Minimis Rate. An organization that has never received a Federally Negotiated Rate may elect a De Minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the De Minimis rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDS annually in order to accept the De Minimis rate.

### **Allowable and Unallowable Costs**

Grant recipients must adhere to the Grant Accountability Transparency Act (GATA) unless otherwise permitted.

### **I. Review Criteria and Selection Process**

The ICCB staff will use the criteria listed in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to review the applications and will award points accordingly. Decisions to award grants

and the funding levels will be determined per application based upon compliance with the requirements of this NOFO and the grant proposal.

Applicants must demonstrate that they meet all requirements under this NOFO as described throughout.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the Application Narrative submitted under this NOFO. Part of the criteria involves the organization, readability, and clarity of the narrative.

- **Project Need (15%)**
  - The applicant identifies both programmatic and financial need for the grant.
  - The applicant includes a statement of need that includes a description of the target population of students to be served including a breakdown (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, educational levels – high school equivalency/GED, workforce status, etc.)
- **Project Development and Activities (30%)**
  - The applicant activities, as outlined in the proposal, are thoroughly described and supported by evidence and/or data, including specific tasks and timelines and how they relate to the identified objectives.
  - The applicant describes the collaboration with key partners, both internal and external, and clearly details each partner's role.
- **Project Impact (30%)**
  - The applicant has described the project outcomes and they are well-defined, measureable, reasonable, and relate to the identified activities, goals and objectives. This may include as applicable certificates and industry credential earned, those who entered employment, or other outcomes
  - The applicant includes the projected unduplicated numbers to be served
  - The applicant describes the potential impact on students and their achievements, the community, the institution, employers, etc.
- **Project Capacity and Sustainability (20%)**
  - The applicant describes their capacity to execute the project including a description of previous experience in implementing successful Innovative Bridge or Transition Programs and related activities such as wrap-around/support services for the targeted population.
  - The applicant describes a clear vision for scalability and replicability in the future, where appropriate.
  - The applicant has a sustainability plan that is detailed and feasible.
- **Completion and submission of all required Documents (5%)**
  - Uniform Application
  - Cover Page
    - Includes: Statement Signed by the President/CEO
  - Two Page Abstract (no more than)

- Application Narrative
- Uniform Budget

## **J. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

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## **Definition of Key Elements of the Grant**

**Bridge Programming** - Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or basic skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand middle-and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. Bridge Programs are considered Pre-IET programs.

Required elements include:

- Contextualized instruction that integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge
- Career development that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work
- Transition services that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs. Services may include academic advising, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services like transportation and childcare.

**Career Pathways** - A career pathway, [career pathway](#), means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns both vertically and horizontally across Secondary Education, Adult Education, Workforce Training and Development, Career and Technical Education, and Postsecondary Education systems, pathways, and programs. The ICCB has approved 16 Career Pathways that lead to meaningful employment and family sustaining wages for students in Adult Education. Students enrolled in Career Pathway programming, develop marketable skills training while receiving contextualized instruction that prepares students for passing High School Equivalency (HSE) exams. Providers administering these programs must ensure that

there is an alignment with regional and local labor market information as described in regional and local workforce plans.

**ICAPS (Models 1 & 2)** - The **ICAPS** model is considered the official Integrated Education and Training (IET) model for Illinois. It capitalizes on integrated partnerships between Adult Education providers and Career and Technical Education (CTE) divisions at Illinois community colleges as well as other train to provide concurrent enrollment and instruction in a team taught environment with comprehensive student supports resulting in skill level gains, high school equivalency certifications, transferrable college credit, and short-term stackable college and industry-recognized credentials.

**IET** - Title II of WIOA defines Integrated Education and Training (IET) as a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. Integrated Education and Training programs prepare a student for academic success and meaningful employment along a Career Pathway have been demonstrated to effectively prepare students for successful transitions into post-secondary education and career employment. Illinois' Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming has two models: Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) Model 1 (Credit) and ICAPS Model 2 (Non-credit).

**Transition Programming/Wrap-Around Services** – Services in conjunction with that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of transition to and through postsecondary education and training. Services may include academic advising, navigators, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services like transportation and childcare.