



Fiscal Year 2026

Advanced Manufacturing Grant

Notice of Funding Opportunity *Competitive*

Application Due Date/Time: February 13, 2026, 5:00 p.m.

Submit Application To: ICCB.cte@illinois.gov

UNIFORM NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

1.	Awarding Agency Name:	<i>Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)</i>
2.	Agency Contact:	<i>Annie Fisher, anne.fisher@illinois.gov</i>
3.	Announcement Type:	<i>Competitive</i>
4.	Type of Assistance Instrument:	<i>Grant</i>
5.	Funding Opportunity Number:	<i>None</i>
6.	Funding Opportunity Title:	<i>FY2026 Advanced Manufacturing Grant</i>
7.	CSFA Number:	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
8.	CSFA Popular Name:	<i>N/A</i>
9.	CFDA Number(s):	<i>N/A</i>
10.	Grant Period	<i>April 01, 2026 – June 30, 2027</i>
11.	Anticipated Number of Awards:	<i>Up to 15</i>
12.	Estimated Total Program Funding:	<i>\$4,500,000</i>
13.	Award Range	<i>For individual college districts: \$100,000 - \$350,000 For consortium applications: \$250,000-\$750,000</i>
14.	Source of Funding:	<i>State</i>
15.	Cost Sharing/Matching Requirement:	<i>No</i>
16.	Indirect Costs Allowed	<i>Yes</i>
	Restrictions on Indirect Costs	<i>No</i>
17.	Posted Date:	<i>December 02, 2025</i>
18.	Closing Date for Applications:	<i>February 13, 2026, 5:00 p.m.</i>
19.	Technical Assistance:	<i>A Bidder's Conference will be held on December 16, 2025, at 3 p.m. Additional technical and accessibility assistance will be provided throughout the grant period to grant recipients.</i>

A. Background and Purpose

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is inviting eligible applicants to apply for the **FY2026 Advanced Manufacturing Grant** and will be awarding approximately \$4.5 million dollars in competitive grant funds. The purpose of this funding is to support the development, scale, and innovation of Advanced Manufacturing programs throughout the Illinois community college system. Modeled off the IMWE proposal, this grant prioritizes system collaboration to promote flexible pathways for learners and responsive programming to the manufacturing industry.

Illinois has a critical need to develop a sustainable, skilled manufacturing pipeline with expanded access to manufacturing education and training pathways in this rapidly evolving sector. Advanced manufacturing in Illinois is aimed to prepare and shape students as they develop mechanical skills, digital fluency, systems thinking, and adaptability as manufacturing technology developments that will be foundational in Illinois's buildout of a dynamic, creative, and technology-driven Advanced Manufacturing workforce development effort (Hartwick, 2025).

B. Eligible Applicants and Method of Submission

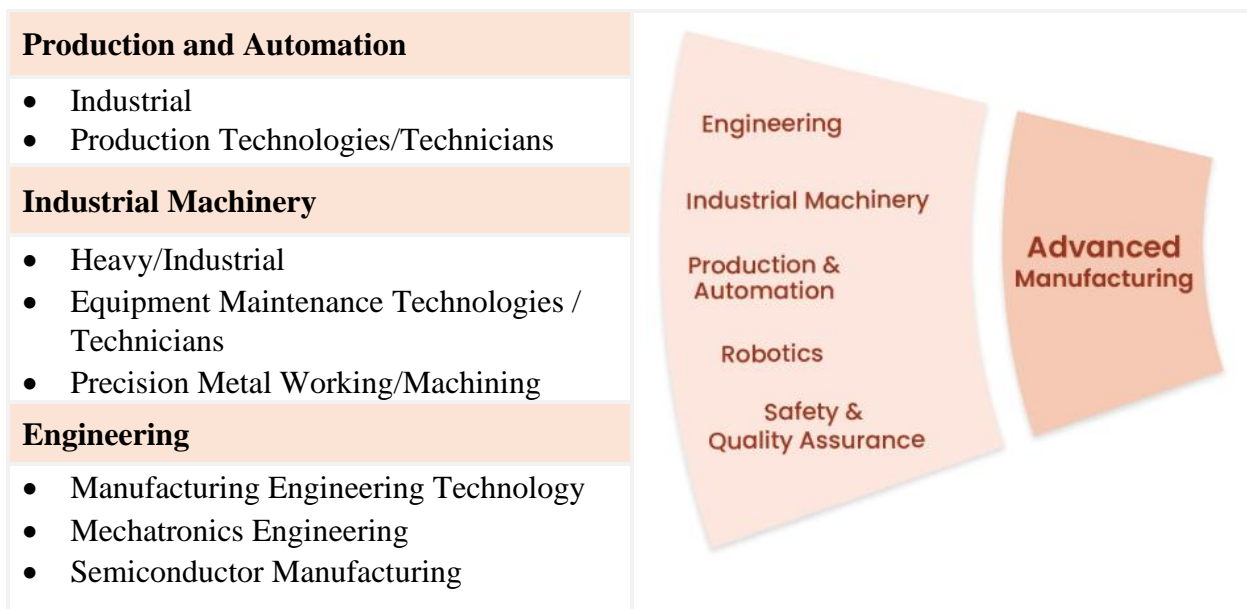
Community college districts or a consortium of districts in the State of Illinois are invited to submit proposals under this NOFO. Applications can be submitted in one of two ways.

1. A district can submit one application.
2. College districts can submit an application as a regional consortium. This model will require one college to be the "lead", accepting administrative and fiduciary responsibilities. **Consortiums must be made up of at least three college districts.**

Colleges participating in a consortium application cannot apply individually as well. The ICCB aims to fund at least three consortium projects and four individual proposals so long as proposals score above 80 points. Consortium projects and individual proposals will be scored separately.

C. Grant Priorities: Programs and Activities

Programs: Priority programs are programs that are aligned to industry certifications and programs that advance the development and maintenance of Advanced Manufacturing infrastructure, as well as safety and quality assurance. The following priority programs were determined by state and national trends, as well as by utilizing the [Advance CTE National Career Clusters Framework](#); the [Advanced Manufacturing cluster](#) is provided in the table below. Priority areas align closely with the programs outlined in the IMWE proposal.



A specific focus on high demand areas, a sound labor market argument for the college's focus in those areas, and the ability to effectively accelerate training will be key elements for evaluation of proposals. *It should be noted that the ICCB program approval process requires a labor market focused argument for program approval.*

Required Activities: Proposals should address all three priority areas- building capacity, program development and expansion, and adoption of a wraparound support service model.

1. Building Regional and Institutional Capacity

This activity is designed to support community colleges in ***building capacity at their institution for advanced manufacturing programming*** and is intended to prepare and position institutions for program development, coordination, and implementation. Use of funds could include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- ✓ Institutional and regional collaboration and systems building
- ✓ Industry partnerships and alignment
- ✓ Faculty and instructor training
- ✓ Curriculum mapping and development
- ✓ Construction and equipment modernization

2. Program Development and/or Expansion

This activity is focused on ***developing and/or expanding advanced manufacturing programming***. Use of funds can include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Curriculum development and pathway development, including competency-based education, dual credit, bridge programs, and adult education integrated education and training
- ✓ Hiring or upskilling of faculty
- ✓ Testing and assessment preparation for certificates and credentials
- ✓ Improving technology and instructional materials

3. **Adopting a Wraparound Student Support Service Model**

This priority focuses on colleges *designing or implementing programs with a student-centered approach* as they create or implement curriculum. A strong student support model includes effective strategies for recruitment, retention, and comprehensive services that help students succeed. Uses of funds can include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Investments in academic advising and career guidance
- ✓ Supplemental instruction
- ✓ Wraparound support services and barrier reduction (academic and non-academic)
- ✓ Community needs assessments
- ✓ Partnering with community-based organizations to braid barrier reduction funding

Other Allowable Activities: The expectation is that applicants will propose activities that will align with statewide priorities that promote equity and diversity in career pathways for Advanced Manufacturing and related programs. Grantees should utilize existing frameworks and resources, where applicable. Other allowable activities that can be carried out by applicants could include:

- Creating non-credit, short-term training programs that support students' transition into credit Advanced Manufacturing programs.
- Engaging in innovative instructional models such as competency-based education, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and offerings in other modalities.
- Improving technology and instructional materials to align with current industry standards and expectations.
- Implementing innovative and collaborative career exploration activities or programs that increase secondary student awareness of Advanced Manufacturing opportunities to expand and diversify the pipeline of prospective learners entering these programs, including engaging middle school students in grades 5 – 8.

D. System Collaboration

To support these three priorities, grantees will be required to participate in systemwide collaborative efforts including but not limited to developing statewide competency-based curriculum. Programs selected for curriculum work will be dependent on programs identified in funded applications. Other systemwide efforts including participation in various meetings, learning communities, or conferences. Most meetings or learning opportunities will take place virtually, but applicants should budget for or be willing to travel 1-2 times during the grant period.

E. Application Package and Deliverables

The ICCB staff will use the criteria listed in this NOFO to review the applications. **All parts of the application package must be completed by the deadline to be considered.** Applicants should ensure that all elements are clearly addressed and are strongly encouraged to use headers to address all elements or some consistent form of response delineation. 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 on the ICCB website when provided: www.iccb.org/grant-opportunities/. **The application must be organized as listed below.**

1. **GATA-Exempt Grant Application** Applicants must complete each section of the “Applicant Information” section in the GATA-Exempt Grant Application in its entirety. If a question is not applicable, please enter NA. *A template is provided on the ICCB Grant Opportunities webpage, see above link.*

2. **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 font that must include the following information in the order listed below and utilizing a header for each Numbered Section. ***Narrative Sections:*** *No template is provided. Your application must follow the cadence of the sections below, or points may be deducted.*

- I. **Project Implementation and Context:**

- a. **Program Identification:** Identify what programs your project will support, develop, revise, and/or expand. It may be helpful to put this information into a table, such as the following.

Program Name	CIP	Credit, Non-Credit, or Both	Culminating Credential(s)	Will this program be developed, revised, expanded, or supported?

- b. **Regional Context and Need:** Provide a description of the region and/or community to be impacted by the grant initiative. What impact do you think these funds will have on the region? Identify any projects happening in the region that this initiative could be aligned to and how you anticipate coordinating with these efforts (e.g. CEJA Workforce Hubs, federal or local manufacturing initiatives, etc.). Additionally, please provide a description of both the programmatic and financial need for these funds. Do not assume the reader knows the specific needs of your college and community.
- c. **Target Population:** Who is the target population for various facets of this project aims to serve (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status of community, high school district)?

- II. **Project Work Plan:** Clearly describe the project activities, associated timeline, and person(s) responsible for each activity to be carried out during the grant period. *A chart or table is encouraged.* Please refer to the list of required and allowable activities that these grant funds can be utilized for. Activities should aim to move the needle on your indicators of accountability. Please utilize the following sections

to guide the organization of your work plan.

- 1) *Employer and Community Engagement*: Engaging in strategic partnerships within your region to conduct needs assessments, inclusive of both labor market and community readiness, develop and implement new programs, curriculum, work-based learning opportunities, etc. Partnerships must include employers, high school districts, labor organizations, and local workforce boards. Other partners could include other institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, industry associations, etc. Activities should detail what partners will be engaged (and how) during the grant process and any other activities that will contribute to grant goals regarding employer and educational partner engagement.
- 2) *Pathway Mapping*: Creating [career pathways](#) and [programs of study](#) that provide seamless transition from high school to postsecondary education and employment. This includes dual credit and other accelerated onramps such as adult education integrated education and training programs and non-credit to credit pathways, with an Advanced Manufacturing focus. Grantees should also consider mapping pathways to include relevant [CEJA workforce programs](#) and [Apprenticeship Illinois](#) frameworks that exist in their regions. Activities should detail what partners will be engaged in the pathway mapping; process for which collaboration will occur; and any other activities that will contribute to grant goals regarding education partner engagement, number of students enrolled (including dual credit students), and number of students retained or employed.
- 3) *Build Capacity and Infrastructure*: Activities may include updating existing programs/programs of study, purchasing or upgrading equipment to meet or exceed current industry standards, providing professional development and training to faculty and staff- including externship opportunities, creating partnerships and identifying efficiencies to maximize capacity.
- 4) *Develop, Revise, or Expand Programs*: Activities should detail processes for which programs may be developed, revised, or expanded; what staff will be responsible for each step in the process; what partners will be engaged (and how); and any other activities that will contribute to grant goals regarding employer and educational partner engagement and number of programs to be developed or revised.
- 5) *Support Students Enrolled in Eligible Programs*: Activities should detail the plan for providing support to students, including eligibility, intake, services offered; who is responsible for each activity; what partners are engaged (and how); and any other activities that will contribute to grant goals regarding number of students engaged, enrolled, retained, or employed.
- 6) *Program Accountability*: Activities should detail who is responsible for tracking progress against grant metrics; process for how the grantee will collect all data elements.
- 7) All other activities carried out under the grant to support the project goals.

- III. Performance Metrics:** All metrics and goals below are *anticipatory*; based on your project proposal, what do you anticipate for the following metrics. Providing this information in a chart is highly encouraged.
- 1) **Number of students to be engaged in this grant.** *This refers to students participating in career exploration activities; students enrolled in priority and eligible programs, students participating in eligible adult education bridge programs, etc.*
 - 2) **Number of students to be enrolled in priority and related programs.** *Enrollment is defined as the number of full-time (considered 12 hours or more in a term or 24 hours or more in an academic year) and part-time students enrolled in priority and eligible programs.*
 - 3) **Number of dual credit students.** *This metric is a subset of 2. Dual credit is defined in Section 1501.313 of the ICCB Administrative Rules. This is the anticipated number of dual credit students to be enrolled in priority and related programs. (Enrollment is defined as number of full-time and part-time students enrolled in priority programs).*
 - 4) **Number of completers.** *Students are considered completers for the purposes of this grant if they complete an eligible 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). 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 Overview 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.)*
 - 5) **Number of programs to be developed.**
 - 6) **Number of programs to be revised or expanded.**
 - 7) **Number of employers engaged.** *Engagement means contributing to curriculum development and alignment activities, hosting work-based learning opportunities, donating equipment, hosting facility tours, participating in hiring events, hiring students.*
 - 8) **Number of education partners** (high schools, four-year institutions) engaged in pathway development and alignment.
- IV. Partnerships:** Description of all partnerships and a brief description of the role each partner will play in the grant project. Partnerships should include employers, high school districts/area career centers, labor organizations, and local workforce boards. Other partners could include other institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, adult education providers, industry associations, etc.
- V. Contingency Plan:** Brief description of plan and budget in the event that the program plan must change, and funds are not able to be spent as defined in the

original narrative and budget (e.g. unsuccessful in hiring Navigator A). *No more than one page.*

4. Uniform Budget

The FY2026 Advanced Manufacturing Grant is a GATA-exempt grant. All applicants must submit a proposed budget using the State of Illinois Uniform Budget provided under the “NON-GATA” section header ([template provided](#)). Applicants should submit budgets based upon the total estimated costs for the project. Costs should be in line with allowable and reasonable costs outlined in this notice of funding opportunity. Grantees should ensure that they have the institutional capacity to fully execute this grant, and all funding provided with it. Grants funds must be expended within the allowable timeframes of the grant period.

Grant Deliverables

1. Carry out deliverables of the proposed scope of work, encompassing all required activities for the selected Objective.
2. Submit required programmatic and fiscal reports on a quarterly basis to ICCB. Reporting templates and other instructions will be made available to grant recipients at a later date.
3. Report on achievement of performance metrics or participate in surveys/information collection as necessary.
4. Participate in any required collaboration efforts, operational meetings, or learning workshops.
5. Submit at least one student success story at the end of the grant period. Template can be accessed [here](#).
6. Provide to the ICCB copies of any curriculum, documents, toolkits, modules, press releases etc., that are developed because of these grant funds.

F. Application and Submission Information

- **Technical Assistance:** An optional bidder’s conference webinar will be held. A recording of the webinar will be made available on the [ICCB Grant Opportunities webpage](#).

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 @ 3:00 p.m.

[Meeting Link](#)

- **Questions:** All questions must be submitted electronically to ICCB.cte@illinois.gov. Phone calls will not be accepted. Include in the subject line: **[College Name] FY2026 Advanced Manufacturing Grant question**. All questions and answers will be posted in an FAQ on the ICCB website.
- **Submission:** Each grant application package must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on **February 13, 2026**, to ICCB.cte@illinois.gov. Grant application and materials may be found on the ICCB website at www.iccb.org/grant-opportunities/. **Paper**

copies of the applications 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 required components of the application are attached and sent in the e-mail.

G. Funding Information

- *Grant Period:* The grant period is April 01, 2026 - June 30, 2027. This is a 15-month grant.
- *Funding Availability:* A total of \$4,500,000 is for grants to community colleges for educational purposes as outlined under this NOFO. Only one application per college will be accepted.
- *Cost Sharing or Matching:* No cost sharing or matching is required.
- *Indirect Cost Rate:* There are no restrictions on Indirect Cost.
- *Allowable and Unallowable Costs:* All costs must be reasonable and necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes of the program.

H. Review Criteria and Selection Process

The ICCB staff will use the criteria listed in this NOFO to review the applications. 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. **All components of the application must be submitted for it to be scored.**

The ICCB aims to fund at least three consortium projects and four individual proposals so long as proposals score above 80 points. Consortium projects and individual proposals will be scored separately.

I. State Awarding Agency Contact

- **Annie Fisher, Director for Career and Technical Education**
- Email: anne.fisher@illinois.gov