



**SPRING 2023 ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OPENING ENROLLMENT
REPORT**

March 2023

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SYSTEMWIDE HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENTS INCREASE 7.2 PERCENT FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND REGISTER SPRING-TO-SPRING ENROLLMENT GROWTH FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SPRING 2010

Overall, compared to the Spring term one year ago, Illinois Community College System Spring 2023 opening headcount enrollments (+7.2 percent) and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments (+6.8 percent) had substantial growth. The opening enrollments reflect the end of the regular spring registration period which is usually the 10th day of class. The preliminary counts derive from the web-based ICCB Spring 2023 Enrollment Survey.

Illinois community colleges continue to be positioned to meet regional and statewide student and employer needs by providing high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective educational opportunities, programs, and services for a diverse student population. The substantial increase in enrollment for the Illinois Community College System represents a dramatic rebound in enrollment from the unprecedented declines due to the pandemic from Spring 2020 to Spring 2021. The Illinois Community College System was no different than National enrollment trends in previous years when student headcount at community colleges across the United States fell 9.5 percent in Spring 2021 and declined again by 7.8 percent in Spring 2022 ([National Student Clearinghouse \(NSC\) Research Center Spring 2022 Enrollment](#)).

Significant findings from the Spring 2023 Illinois Community College Opening Enrollment Report include:

- Spring 2023 headcount enrollments (+7.2 percent) and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments (+6.8 percent) both increased from the previous year.
- Thirty-nine community colleges experienced an increase in headcount enrollment from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023, while nine community colleges had a decrease.
- Five of six instructional areas exhibited increases in headcount enrollment from the previous year. Instructional areas primarily dependent on in-person instruction had two of the largest increases: Career and Technical Education (+9.6 percent) and Vocational Skill Training (+10.1 percent).
- Transfer programs, which is the largest instructional area in the Illinois Community College System, increased 6.4 percent from the previous year, while General Studies Certificate programs increased by 9.1 percent during the same timeframe.
- Adult Education, which encompasses a substantial at-risk population, increased headcount by 29.0 percent from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023.

- For Dual Credit, which allows academically prepared high school students to simultaneously earn credits that count toward a high school diploma and a college degree, headcount enrollments increased 10.4 percent in Spring 2023 compared to Spring 2022 and increased 23.9 percent from two years ago.
- While the number of distance education course enrollment (seat count in courses) decreased in Spring 2023 as compared to the previous year, it remains a prevalent and flexible form of course delivery with 207,858 online course enrollments in the current Spring.

Table 1 provides systemwide comparative spring census enrollment counts for the last five years. The Spring 2023 semester headcount was 249,836 compared to 233,041 last year (a headcount increase of 16,795 or 7.2 percent). The latest FTE count was 132,425 compared with 124,013 a year ago (an FTE increase of 8,412 or 6.8 percent). FTE figures reflect the total number of credit hours being taken by students divided by 15—the number of semester hours traditionally considered a full-time class load.

Table 1
SUMMARY OF OPENING SPRING ENROLLMENTS IN
ILLINOIS PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES FROM 2019 TO 2023

	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
Headcount	283,146*	279,771	239,819*	233,041	249,836
Percent Change	-2.2%	-1.2%	-14.3%	-2.8%	7.2%
FTE	154,740*	152,349	131,192*	124,013	132,425
Percent Change	-3.5%	-1.5%	-13.9%	-5.5%	6.8%

* Colleges Provided Revised Figures

Table 2 provides a comparison of fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2023 spring headcount enrollments for each community college. Among the 48 community colleges since last year, headcount increases were reported at 36 colleges (1.0 percent or higher). Eight colleges saw decreases (1.0 percent or more) compared to last year. Four colleges reported little or no change (less than 1.0 percent) versus last year. Longer term, statewide headcount enrollments were down 11.8 percent compared to Spring 2019.

Table 3 contains a comparison of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments for the same five-year period. Compared to last year, Spring 2023 FTE increases were reported by 40 of the colleges, decreases were reported by four colleges, and four colleges indicated little or no change. Longer term, statewide FTE enrollments were down 14.4 percent compared to Spring 2019.

Table 4 provides fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2023 spring opening course enrollments (duplicated) in internet-based courses at each community college.

Adjustments in educational offerings due to COVID mitigation efforts reflect the massive spike in online courses in 2021 as colleges adapted to meet student needs and follow recommended safety protocols. This spring’s enrollment in internet-based courses reflects a decrease of nine percent compared to last year but is still significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. At the beginning of the Spring 2023 semester, there were 207,858 course enrollments (duplicated) in internet courses compared to 228,781 in Spring 2022 (a decrease of 9.1 percent) and 110,716 in Spring 2019 (an increase of 87.7 percent). Compared to last year, Spring 2023 duplicated internet enrollments increased at 14 colleges, decreased at 31 colleges, and had little or no change at three colleges. Figure 1 provides a trend line of online course offerings by Spring term for the last five years.

Figure 1. Opening Spring Online Course Enrollment Trends in Illinois Public Community Colleges from 2019 to 2023

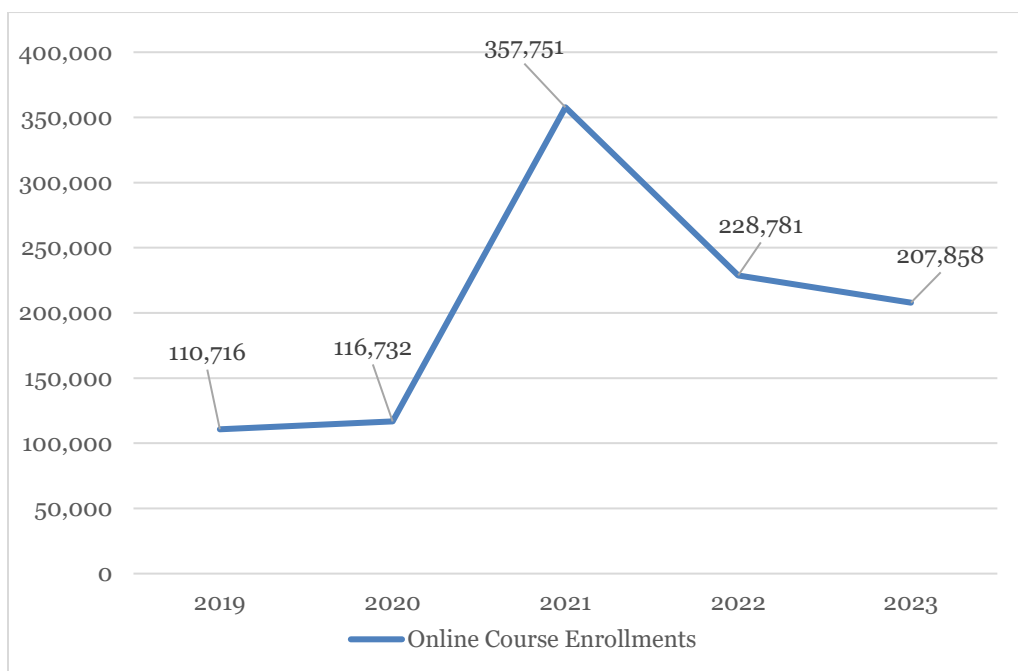


Table 5 provides fiscal year 2023 spring opening enrollments by instructional program area. Transfer was the largest instructional program, accounting for 59.5 percent of enrollments in Spring 2023. Career and Technical Education was the second largest instructional program, accounting for 25.7 percent. Students in Adult Education (ABE, ASE, and ESL) comprised 9.0 percent of enrollments, while 4.5 percent of enrollments were in General Associates programs. Enrollments in Vocational Skills (1.1 percent) and General Studies (0.2 percent) programs represented only about one percent of enrollments in Spring 2023. Figure 2 provides spring opening enrollment headcount by instructional program area for Spring 2021 through Spring 2023. Compared to last year, decreases were seen in Adult Basic Education (-25.5 percent), General Associates (-21.4 percent), and Adult Secondary Education (-8.1 percent), while increases were noted in English as a Second Language (71.5 percent), Vocational Skills (10.1 percent), Career and Technical Education (9.6 percent), General Studies (9.1 percent), and Transfer (6.4 percent).

Figure 2. Opening Spring Headcount Enrollment by Instructional Program Area in Illinois Public Community Colleges from 2021 to 2023

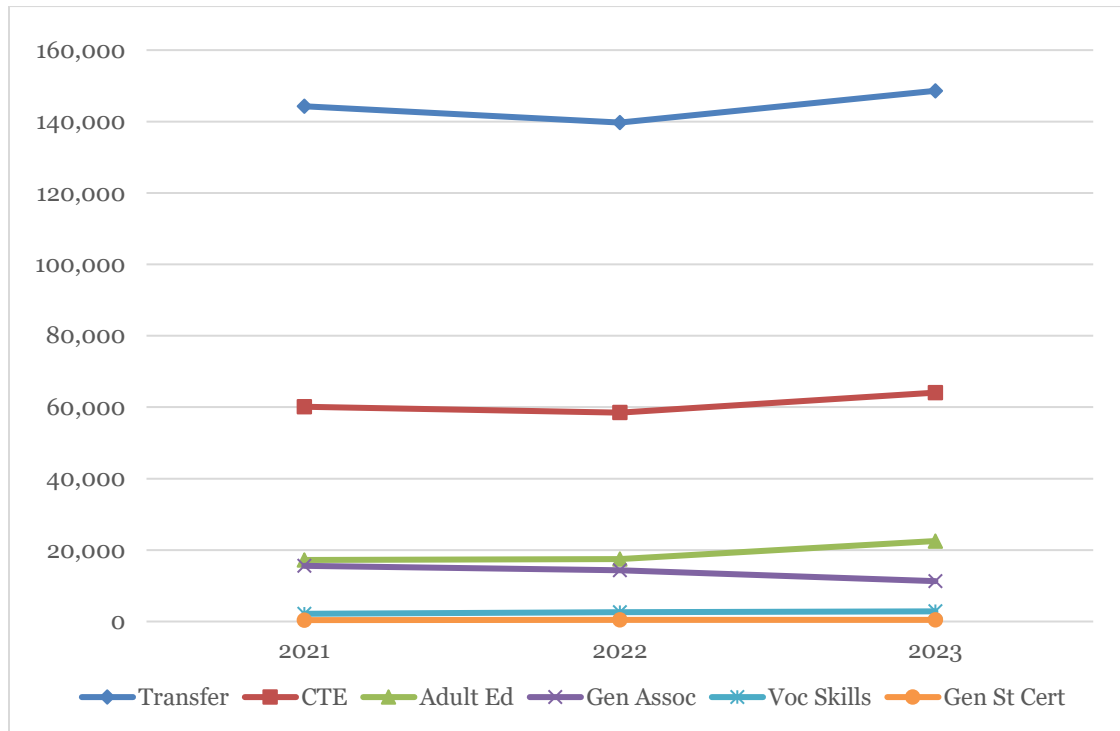


Table 6 provides opening headcount enrollments of dual credit students in Spring 2023. At the beginning of the Spring 2023 semester there were 60,068 enrollments for dual credit students, which represents nearly one in four enrollments (24.0 percent). Enrollments in dual credit increased 10.4 percent compared with a year ago and 23.9 percent from two years ago.

Additional Background: The Spring 2023 preliminary summary student counts in this report (Spring 2023 Community College Opening Enrollment Report) derive from the web-based ICCB Spring 2023 Enrollment Survey. Spring opening enrollment information for students is recorded by the colleges at the end of the regular spring registration period, which is typically the 10th day of class. Beyond the survey, which allows ICCB and the Illinois Community College System to timely and broadly address stakeholder inquiries about spring enrollment, ICCB also annually collects student-level data from community colleges for the spring term via its annual academic year student-level collection.

It should be noted these counts also only provide a "snapshot" of opening spring term enrollment for year-to-year and institution-to-institution comparisons. The diversity of the community college system and its students is not fully captured in these opening enrollment snapshot data. Community college flexible scheduling (e.g., modules, other intensive late start classes, etc.) is necessary to accommodate student schedules and compete successfully in the marketplace. Hence, enrollment trends are more fully captured through use of annual data. More complete data are available via [ICCB's Data Book](#). The joint ICCB-IBHE [Illinois Postsecondary Profiles](#) platform also provides

pertinent trend information on Enrollment, Affordability, Progress, Advancement, and Completion for all 2- and 4-year higher education institutions in Illinois.