



**SPRING 2024 ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OPENING ENROLLMENT
REPORT**

March 2024

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SYSTEMWIDE HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENTS INCREASE 5.1 PERCENT FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND REGISTER SPRING-TO-SPRING ENROLLMENT GROWTH FOR THE SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

Overall, compared to the Spring term one year ago, Illinois Community College System Spring 2024 opening headcount enrollments (+5.1 percent) and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments (+5.5 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 2024 Enrollment Survey.

The Spring 2023 to Spring 2024 enrollment increase of 5.1 percent represents the second consecutive year of substantial growth. The pandemic had a profound effect on enrollment and Illinois community colleges continue to aggressively recruit and retain students as enrollment rebounds. The most recent [national data on enrollment](#) available through the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center shows a 2.6 percent enrollment increase nationally in the community college sector. Illinois is outpacing growth nationally.

Significant findings from the Spring 2024 Illinois Community College Opening Enrollment Report include:

- Spring 2024 headcount enrollments (+5.1 percent) and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments (+5.5 percent) both increased from the previous year.
- Thirty-six community colleges experienced an increase in headcount enrollment from Spring 2023 to Spring 2024, while twelve 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, including Career and Technical Education (+5.0 percent) and Vocational Skill Training (-7.3 percent) had mixed results compared to the previous year.
- Transfer programs, which is the largest instructional area in the Illinois Community College System, increased 2.7 percent from the previous year, while General Studies Certificate programs increased by 0.4 percent during the same timeframe.
- Adult Education, which encompasses a substantial at-risk population, increased headcount by 19.0 percent from Spring 2023 to Spring 2024.
- 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 9.1 percent in Spring 2024 compared to Spring 2023 and increased 35.2 percent from three years ago.

- While the number of distance education course enrollment (seat count in courses) decreased in Spring 2024 as compared to the previous year, it remains a prevalent and flexible form of course delivery with 203,204 online course enrollments in the current Spring.

Table 1 provides systemwide comparative spring census enrollment counts for the last five years. The Spring 2024 semester headcount was 262,638 compared to 249,836 last year (a headcount increase of 12,802 or 5.1 percent). The latest FTE count was 139,764 compared with 132,425 a year ago (an FTE increase of 7,339 or 5.5 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 2020 TO 2024

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	Spring 2023	Spring 2024
Headcount	279,771	239,819*	233,041	249,836	262,638
Percent Change	-1.2%	-14.3%	-2.8%	7.2%	5.1%
FTE	152,349	131,192*	124,013	132,425	139,764
Percent Change	-1.5%	-13.9%	-5.5%	6.8%	5.5%

* Colleges Provided Revised Figures

Table 2 provides a comparison of fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2024 spring headcount enrollments for each community college. Among the 48 community colleges since last year, headcount increases were reported at 35 colleges (1.0 percent or higher). Nine 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 6.1 percent compared to Spring 2020.

Table 3 contains a comparison of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments for the same five-year period. Compared to last year, Spring 2024 FTE increases were reported by 34 of the colleges, decreases were reported by nine colleges, and five colleges indicated little or no change. Longer term, statewide FTE enrollments were down 8.3 percent compared to Spring 2020.

Table 4 provides fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2024 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 two percent compared to last year but is still significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. At the beginning of the Spring 2024 semester, there were

203,204 course enrollments (duplicated) in internet courses compared to 207,858 in Spring 2023 (a decrease of 2.2 percent) and 116,732 in Spring 2020 (an increase of 74.1 percent). Compared to last year, Spring 2024 duplicated internet enrollments increased at 22 colleges, decreased at 22 colleges, and had little or no change at four 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 2020 to 2024

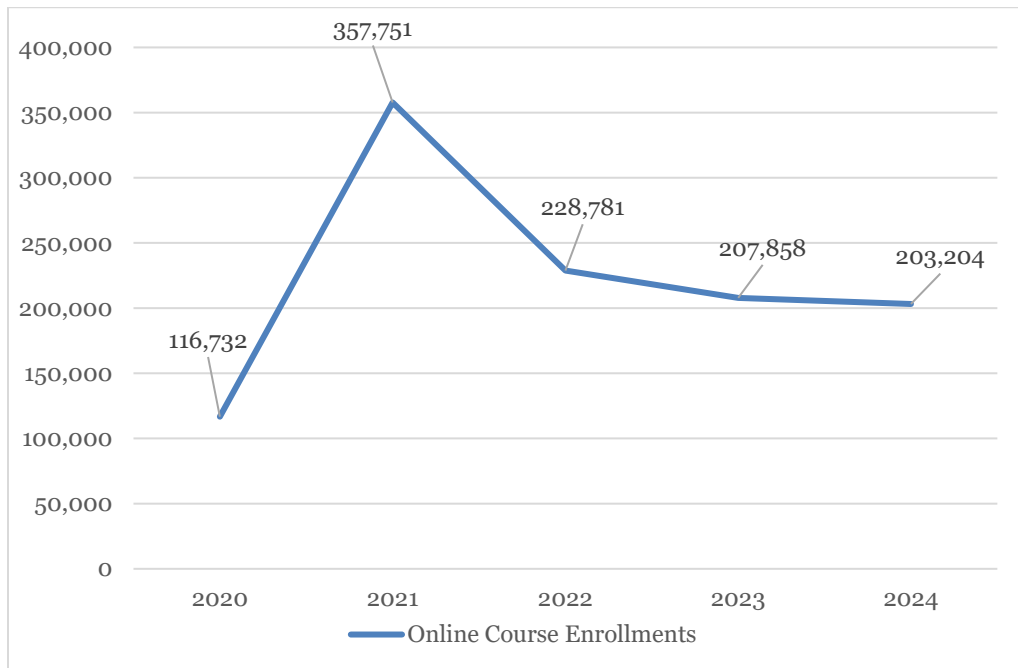


Table 5 provides fiscal year 2023 spring opening enrollments by instructional program area. Transfer was the largest instructional program, accounting for 58.1 percent of enrollments in Spring 2024. Career and Technical Education was the second largest instructional program, accounting for 25.6 percent. Students in Adult Education (ABE, ASE, and ESL) comprised 10.2 percent of enrollments, while 4.9 percent of enrollments were in General Associates programs. Enrollments in Vocational Skills (1.0 percent) and General Studies (0.2 percent) programs represented only about one percent of enrollments in Spring 2024. Figure 2 provides spring opening enrollment headcount by instructional program area for Spring 2021 through Spring 2024. Compared to last year, decreases were seen only in Vocational Skills (-7.3 percent), while increases were noted in Adult Basic Education (20.9 percent), English as a Second Language (19.5 percent), General Associates (13.2 percent), Adult Secondary Education (11.0 percent), Career and Technical Education (5.0 percent), Transfer (2.7 percent), and General Studies (0.4 percent).

Figure 2. Opening Spring Headcount Enrollment by Instructional Program Area in Illinois Public Community Colleges from 2021 to 2024

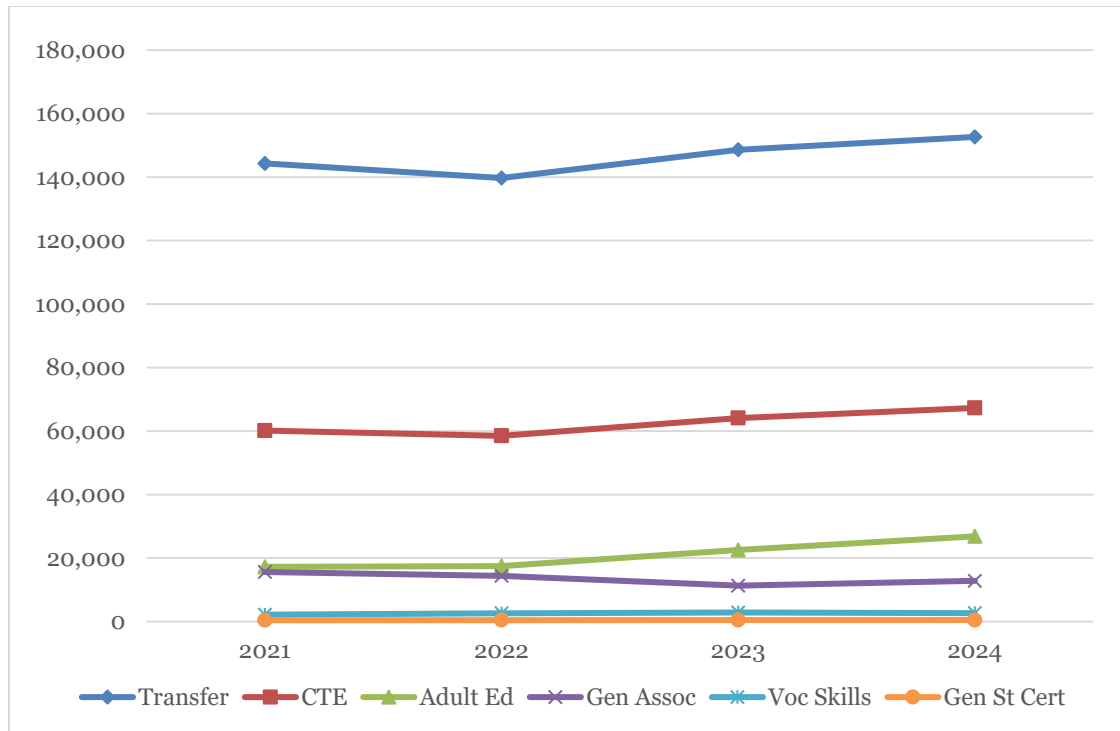


Table 6 provides opening headcount enrollments of dual credit students in Spring 2024. At the beginning of the Spring 2024 semester there were 65,516 enrollments for dual credit students, which represents nearly one in four enrollments (24.9 percent). Enrollments in dual credit increased 9.1 percent compared with a year ago and 35.2 percent from three years ago.

Additional Background: The Spring 2024 preliminary summary student counts in this report (Spring 2024 Community College Opening Enrollment Report) derive from the web-based ICCB Spring 2024 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.