Fiscal Year 2024

Noncredit Workforce Training Initiative

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Application Due Date/Time: March 8, 2024
Submit Applications to Alex Weidenhamer,
Alex.Weidenhamer@illinois.gov

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) SUMMARY INFORMATION

1.	Awarding Agency Name:	*Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)*
2.	Agency Contact:	*Alex Weidenhamer, Alex.weidenhamer@illinois.gov; 217-558-5671*
3.	Announcement Type:	*Initial announcement*
4.	Type of Assistance Instrument:	*Grant*
5	Program Name:	*Noncredit Workforce Training*
6.	Grant Period	*April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025*
7.	Anticipated Number of Awards:	*45*
8.	Estimated Total Program Funding:	*$4.8 M*
9.	Award Range	*$100,000 per college*
10.	Source of Funding:	*State*
11.	Cost Sharing/Matching Requirement:	*No*
12.	Indirect Costs Allowed	*Yes*
	Restrictions on Indirect Costs	*No*
13.	Posted Date:	*January 5, 2024*
14.	Closing Date for Applications:	*March 8, 2024*
15.	Technical Assistance:	*Technical assistance will be provided throughout the grant period to grant recipients.*

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is inviting community colleges to apply for the Noncredit Workforce Training Grant. The ICCB will provide **$100,000 in funding** to the community colleges to support noncredit training and business solution initiatives. For the purposes of this NOFO, noncredit workforce training is defined as training, not tied to college credit hours, that results in short-term certificates, industry-recognized certification, or other occupational credentials and excludes developmental education, youth programs, community enrichment, adult education, and English language acquisition. For the purposes of this NOFO, noncredit workforce training does encompass vocational skills courses (PCS 1.6), if that course or set of courses culminates in a certificate, industry-recognized certification, or other occupational credential.

The Illinois Community College System is the largest workforce training provider in the state. Illinois community colleges worked with nearly 9,800 unique employers in 2020 contributing an estimated $3.5 billion in economic outputs, captured through the most recent Economic Impact Study[1]. Although noncredit enrollment has not yet reached pre-pandemic figures, enrollment in FY2023 climbed just over 9 percent from the previous fiscal year with 116,544 unduplicated enrollments[2]. Of those, 34,000 were enrolled through business and industry contracts or professional/ vocational development programs. This NOFO aims to build capacity and impact of noncredit workforce training in Illinois community colleges aligning to one of ICCB's strategic goals:

> *Goal 3: Contribute to economic and workforce development by supporting the Illinois community college system's effort to provide high-quality, dynamic workforce training opportunities that build essential skills for high-value work through apprenticeships, work-based learning opportunities, and competency-based instructional models that result in economic mobility through increased credential attainment.*

Noncredit training is one of many community college functions, allowing the college to be nimble and swift to respond to employer needs. However, noncredit workforce training is not financial aid eligible and there are limited state and federal funds that support this function. The need for funding to meet the growing demand for noncredit training has increased as costs for employers, students, and employees have grown. This dedicated funding aims to support community colleges in expanding their noncredit offerings and exploring and implementing innovative solutions to workforce challenges.

In August 2023, the ICCB administered a Noncredit Survey to the Illinois community system with a 50 percent response rate. The survey identified the following themes:
- Small businesses are in the most need for training assistance.
- Employers are in need of both technical training as well as professional development for employees on leadership, communication, and problem-solving, in addition to essential employability skills.
- Training needs are driven by in-demand sectors, with the majority identifying manufacturing and healthcare as the greatest requests for training.
- Challenges to meeting customized training needs of business partners include cost of training and having available and qualified instructors.

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[1] https://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/data/ICCB_Statewide_Report_Final.pdf
[2] SOURCE OF DATA: ICCB Centralized Data System—Noncredit Course Enrollment (N1)

The **purpose** of this grant initiative is to increase responsiveness to employer needs and workforce shortages through building capacity and strengthening the impact of noncredit workforce training at community colleges.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The ICCB is inviting eligible applicants, community colleges, to apply under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). **One application per community college. Internal collaboration is highly encouraged.** Successful applicants must be the provider of the direct services; however, applicants may subcontract for services that enhance program services or reduce barriers for eligible employers or students.

C. FUNDING

$100,000 per community college for noncredit training as outlined above in Section B. The grant period for this funding opportunity is April 1, 2024- March 31, 2025.

D. TARGET ENTITIES

This grant is intended to provide noncredit training services to:
- **Individuals 18 years or older** leading to employment in high skill, high wage, and in-demand occupations, with an emphasis on those underserved by education and workforce systems.
- **Incumbent workers**, by working directly with local employers, to provide specialized training or upskilling.
- **Employers** by provide business solutions and other training needs.

E. GRANT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this grant are to provide funding to:

1) **Expand Noncredit Program Offerings:** Colleges should aim to prioritize significantly in-demand and emerging occupations for programming built, expanded, or supported through this grant.
2) **Offer Business Solutions to Employers**: In addition to customized training, community colleges offer a suite of business solutions to employers. Examples of business solutions include quality and safety audits; training workshops relevant to leadership, essential employability skills, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access; contract procurement assistance, etc. Colleges should prioritize small businesses (500 employees or less) as well as minority or woman- owned businesses for these business solutions. Colleges may expand the number of employers they offer business solutions to and/or provide additional services as a result of these grant funds.
3) **Increase Affordability of Noncredit Training for Students**, particularly those who are low-income, un- or underemployed, and or otherwise underrepresented in the sector in which training is be offered. Activities may include offsetting costs of training, creating noncredit apprenticeship programs, and increasing efficiencies to sustain affordability.

F. REQUIRED AND ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

Required Activities:
1) **Offer Noncredit Training**. Colleges are required to utilize grant funds for noncredit training. This must not supplant current offerings. Funding should be utilized for <u>new training and or expanding current offerings</u>. Training can include customized training for incumbent workers and/or training for new entrants to the workforce that culminates in an industry-recognized credential. Training must be for an in-demand or an emerging field.
2) **Articulate Noncredit to Credit Transitions**. Colleges must identify at least one noncredit offering to articulate/map a pathway and/or process for students to transition from noncredit to credit without duplicating courses or competencies. For most community colleges, bifurcation exists between the noncredit and credit functions of the college[3]. Thus, students often lack a direct pathway into credit programs to continue their education. Funding cannot be utilized to support credit programming. Technical assistance will be provided for this activity.
3) **Participate in the Statewide Behind Every Employer Campaign**. As a way to further promote this investment and its impact on Illinois employers, the ICCB will be participating in the Behind Every Employer Campaign. [Behind Every Employer](#) is a campaign that strategically connects companies with education and workforce organizations to provide solutions for the workforce challenges they face. The campaign website houses a locator map that allows employers to search for local educators and the solutions they provide to solve workforce challenges. Colleges will be required to participate in professional development regarding the campaign and provide general information to ICCB in order to update the campaign webpage.
4) **Noncredit Data Collection:** Through this grant opportunity, the ICCB will be enhancing its noncredit data collection. Colleges should utilize grant resources to bolster their collection and tracking of noncredit data elements, including upgrading of systems, staff capacity, etc. Robust and thorough data collection is critical to evaluating and demonstrating the importance of community college noncredit offerings to the state's economy and workforce. The ICCB will work with colleges over the grant period to identify additional data elements that will be added to the N1 Collection.

Other Allowable Activities:

In order to meet local employer needs, this grant is intended to provide maximum flexibility. Other than the required activities, colleges may utilize grant funds on the following activities. This list is not exclusive.

- Noncredit short-term training programs for employers that support, among others, minority students'/employees' transition to and retention in employment.
- Essential (basic) and employability skills training to help employers address this deficit by providing basic skills training and instruction where needed and appropriate. Colleges may provide employability skills training. This may be in the form of workshops for new or current employees to ensure individuals are successful in the workplace.
- Business consulting services, process reviews, quality and safety audits
- Focused on-the-job training
- Stand-alone, skill-specific workshop or seminar
- Behavioral and skills assessments of business employees or potential hires

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[3] https://edstrategy.org/wp-contentthat does not have to be "t/uploads/2020/10/A-More-Unified-Community-College_FINAL.pdf

- Entrepreneurship seminars and workshops to individuals interested in start-up businesses
- Contract procurement assistance
- Business attraction, retention and expansion assistance to economic development entities and employers
- Noncredit curriculum development (or alignment to credit programming)
- Collaboration efforts between noncredit and credit to improve student experience
- Program accreditation
- Collaborations with internal partners to increase student pipelines and improve student experience, such as adult education, student services, Veterans' staff, disability and access centers, etc.
- Collaborations with other community colleges regionally to address workforce needs
- Strengthening partnerships with external entities designed to support employers' training/employment needs, such as chambers of commerce, local workforce areas, industry associations, economic development, and public workforce programs.
- Offering wraparound support services to students, including coaching

G. GRANT DELIVERABLES

- Carry out deliverables of the proposed scope of work as aligned with the objectives of this opportunity.
- Carry out and participate in all required activities.
- Attend operational meetings as scheduled throughout the year, as well as participate in other meetings, as requested.
- Submit one success story for an employer and one success story for a student by May 30, 2025.
- Submit required programmatic and fiscal reports on a quarterly basis per the schedule below to Alex.Weidenhamer@illinois.gov (Reporting templates and other instructions will be made available to grant recipients at a later date.)

Reporting Schedule		
Quarter	Period	Date Due
1	April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024	July 30, 2024
2	July 1, 2024– September 30, 2024	October 30, 2024
3	October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024	January 30, 2025
4	January 1, 2025- March 31, 2025	April 30, 2025

GRANT GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Due to the flexible nature and individualized approach each college will take to implement this grant, there will be a general set of programmatic goals as well as individually prescribed outcomes that match the activities of the specific college. Grant outcomes will be captured on the Project Overview Template. Colleges will set targets (see below) that may be negotiated with the ICCB.

Participant-Level Outcomes:
1) Number of noncredit students to be trained
2) Percentage of noncredit student completers employed two quarters after completion (*establish baseline)*

Programmatic Outcomes:
3) Number of employers to be served
4) Number of noncredit training programs offered
5) Number of new services/programs provided to employers (from X to Y)

Other information that will be collected on a quarterly or annual basis:
- Employer names
  - Identify if employer is minority or woman- owned business
  - Industry sector by employer
- Services provided to employers by program (general description)
- Training program names
- Certificates and/or credentials completed by students
- Student demographics

H. APPLICATION PACKAGE

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.*

2) **Project Overview Template**
   The applicant must complete the Cover Page and Application Summation Template (*template provided*) which encompasses applicant information and a synopsis of the application, including but not limited to:
   - Summary of the programs and activities.
   - Grant Outcomes

3) **Application Narrative**
   The eligible applicant must submit a narrative of no more than five 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

I. Statement of Need:
- Briefly provide the justification for the selection of programs to be supported (e.g. industry focus, labor market information, etc.)

II. 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 align with the objectives and should aim to move the needle on your grant goals.
- All **required activities** of this grant must be addressed and clearly identified in the Work Plan. Because of the nature of employers' changing needs, the ICCB understands the need for flexibility and broad timelines.
  1) Offer Noncredit Training.
  2) Articulate Noncredit to Credit Transitions.
  3) Participate in the Statewide Behind Every Employer Campaign.
  4) Noncredit Data Collection.
- Applicants should clearly describe each program that will be built, supported, or expanded.
- Activities where other partners are involved should include a brief description of the role each partner will play in the grant project.

III. Impact: Description of the benefits and impact of the project on your institution, community, employers, and students.

IV. Scalability and Replicability: Description of how the various activities could be scaled or replicated by others in the State. *All resources and products developed with grant funds will be provided from the grantee to the ICCB to share with the field.*

The Application Narrative submitted under this NOFO should be organized, clear and understandable. Use of charts and bullets is welcomed.

4) **Uniform Budget**

All applicants must submit a proposed budget on the State of Illinois Uniform Grant Budget Template (*template provided*). Applicants should submit budgets based upon the total estimated costs for the project.

I. APPLICATION/SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Each grant application package must be submitted no later than March 8, 2024 11:59 p.m.. to Alex.Weidenhamer@illinois.gov. Grant application and materials may be found on the ICCB website at https://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 items in the package are attached and sent in the e-mail. Grant recipients must comply with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and equal employment.

To provide technical assistance to grantees on this opportunity, there will be a virtual meeting on **Wednesday, January 24, 2024**. The same session will be offered twice:

10:00 – 11:30 - Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84038799983?pwd=aFJBTFlleEVjTVI2NDZwTkFuWEpJZz09

2:00 – 3:30. Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88542757343?pwd=dytHazFMRER3ejVHSldzVENGY3ljQT09

J. Funding Information

Grant Period
The grant period is April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025.

Funding Availability
A total of $4.8M 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 of $100,000 per community college.

Funding Deadlines
- Grant funds must be obligated by March 31, 2025
- Good/products must be ordered by March 31, 2025/received by May 31, 2025
- Services must be rendered by March 31, 2025
- Grant funds must be expended by May 31, 2025
- Final budget modifications are due by February 28, 2025

Cost Sharing or Matching
- No cost sharing or matching is required.

Indirect Cost Rate
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 theDe Minimis rate.

K. REVIEW CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

L. State Awarding Agency Contact

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