



## **Fiscal Year 2024**

### **Data Center Curriculum Project Initiative**

#### **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**Application Due Date/Time: April 26, 2024**

Submit Applications to [chris.blankenhorn@illinois.gov](mailto:chris.blankenhorn@illinois.gov)

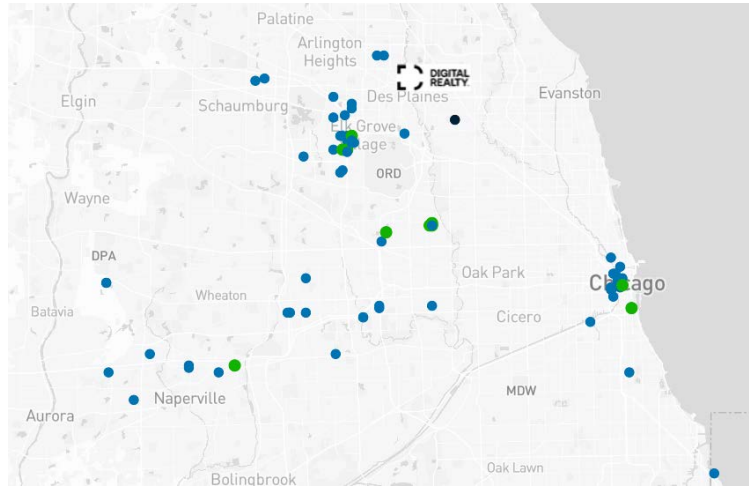
## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) SUMMARY INFORMATION

1.	Awarding Agency Name:	<i>Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)</i>
2.	Agency Contact:	<i>Whitney Thompson, <a href="mailto:whitney.thompson@illinois.gov">whitney.thompson@illinois.gov</a></i>
3.	Announcement Type:	<i>Initial announcement</i>
4.	Type of Assistance Instrument:	<i>Grant</i>
5.	Program Name:	<i>Data Center Curriculum Project</i>
6.	Grant Period	<i>May 15, 2024- June 30, 2025</i>
7.	Anticipated Number of Awards:	<i>2-4</i>
8.	Estimated Total Program Funding:	<i>\$1,000,000</i>
9.	Award Range	<i>\$250,000-\$350,000</i>
10.	Source of Funding:	<i>State</i>
11.	Cost Sharing/Matching Requirement:	<i>No</i>
12.	Indirect Costs Allowed	<i>Yes</i>
	Restrictions on Indirect Costs	<i>No</i>
13.	Posted Date:	<i>March 25, 2024</i>
14.	Closing Date for Applications:	<i>April 26, 2024</i>
15.	Technical Assistance:	<i>Technical assistance will be provided throughout the grant period to grant recipients.</i>

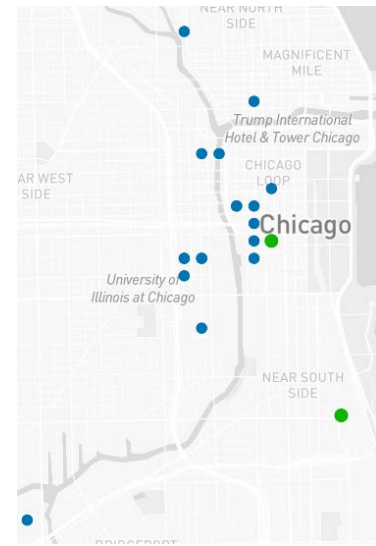
**A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is inviting community colleges to apply for the Data Center Curriculum Development Project Grant. The **purpose** of this grant initiative is to support the development of data center operator programming by community colleges in order to respond to the growing workforce demand in the data center market in the Chicagoland area. The ICCB will provide **\$250,000-\$350,000** in funding to each eligible awardee for the purposes of this grant.

Data Centers are the physical facilities that house computing machines and related information technology infrastructure, such as servers and network equipment, and store the digital data demanded by users. The Chicagoland region is becoming a secondary market for data center growth. By the end of 2025, data centers across the nation will require more than 300,000 full-time workers<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 1: Data Center Locations, Chicagoland Region<sup>2</sup>**



**Figure 2: Data Centers in Chicago**

The ICCB has been working in partnership with the Data Center Coalition, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, and various data centers in the Chicagoland region to design the Data Center Curriculum Project. Through this project, an employer-led advisory committee (committee membership referenced in Table 1) was developed to examine workforce and training barriers as well as identify solutions toward creating a seamless talent pipeline. These determined solutions are to partner with community colleges to develop programming, modeled after the Northern Virginia Community College Data Center Operator program, to address these workforce needs as well as investing in the development and infrastructure buildout of required classroom and lab space.

**Table 1: Illinois Community College Board Data Center Advisory Committee**

<b>Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce</b>
<b>City Colleges of Chicago</b>
<b>Data Center Coalition</b>
<b>Equinix</b>
<b>iMasons</b>

<sup>1</sup> Data Center Coalition, 2024: <https://dcc.silkstart.com/reports-and-publications>

<sup>2</sup> Data Center Map: [Data Center Map - Colocation, Cloud and Connectivity](#)

<b>Iron Mountain</b>
<b>Moraine Valley Community College</b>
<b>Northern Virginia Community College</b>
<b>QTS</b>
<b>STACK Infrastructure</b>
<b>Triton College</b>
<b>William Rainey Harper College</b>

## **B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

The ICCB is inviting eligible applicants, community colleges in the Chicagoland area with data centers operating in their district (see map for more information: [Data Center Map - Colocation, Cloud and Connectivity](#)), to apply under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). **The ICCB will accept one application per community college district.** Consortium applications are allowable. 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**

\$250,000-\$350,000 per applicant as outlined above in Section B. The grant period for this funding opportunity is May 15, 2024-June 30, 2025.

## **D. GRANT OBJECTIVES**

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<sup>3</sup>. This NOFO aims build on this impact by supporting the development of key programs that support Data Center employers.

## **E. REQUIRED AND ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES**

### **Required Activities:**

- 1) **Curriculum Development:** Create or modify existing curriculum, based on guidance from the Data Center Curriculum Project Advisory Committee, as well as local employers. Model curriculum will be based on NOVA’s Data Center Operator program.
- 2) **Procure Equipment:** Purchase necessary equipment and secure adequate training space or facilities to carry out programming.
- 3) **Advisory Committee:** Actively participate on the Illinois Community College Board’s Data Center Curriculum Project Advisory Committee, which meets twice annually. The next Advisory Committee meeting is subject to meet in-person in November 2024.

## **F. GRANT DELIVERABLES**

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/data/ICCB\\_Statewide\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/data/ICCB_Statewide_Report_Final.pdf)

- 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 by July 30, 2025.
- Submit required programmatic and fiscal reports on a quarterly basis per the schedule below to [chris.blankenhorn@illinois.gov](mailto:chris.blankenhorn@illinois.gov) . (Reporting templates and other instructions will be made available to grant recipients at a later date.)

<b>Reporting Schedule</b>		
<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Date Due</b>
<b>1</b>	May 15, 2024 – June 30, 2024	July 30, 2024
<b>2</b>	July 1, 2024– September 30, 2024	October 30, 2024
<b>3</b>	October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024	January 30, 2025
<b>4</b>	January 1, 2025- March 31, 2025	April 30, 2025
<b>5</b>	April 1, 2025- June 30, 2025	July 30, 2025

## **G. 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 or some consistent form of response delineation to address all elements. Applicants will receive confirmation of ICCB’s receipt of their 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/](http://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) **Application Narrative**

The eligible applicant must submit a narrative of no more than four 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 describe the need of data centers in your district. Specifically, cite the need for data center operators, but adjacent or other careers that contribute to the growth of data centers may also be noted (e.g. engineers, project managers, sales representatives, various computer and information technology roles, security, and administrative roles).

- Describe the extent to which the college has a relationship with various data centers in the district. Does the college have existing partnerships? What employers does the college intend to engage? Specific employers should be named. Colleges do not need to provide letters of commitment from various employers.
- Identify any current programming that compliments the DCO program, including courses and faculty who would be available and qualified to teach DCO course.

**II. Work Plan:** Clearly describe the projected 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.

- The Work Plan should identify Grant Lead, faculty engagement, and specific employers.
- All **required activities** of this grant must be addressed and clearly identified in the Work Plan. Because this grant will include significant leadership and guidance from the ICCB, advisory committee members, and NOVA, the ICCB understands that work plans submitted will be informed by this guidance and may be subject to change.
- Applicants should clearly describe each program that will be built, supported, or expanded.
- Applicants should describe their plan for staffing and instruction, including the need to hire or upskill current faculty for program implementation.
- Activities where other partners are involved should include a brief description of the role each partner will play in the grant project.

**III. Budget Narrative:** In addition to the Uniform Budget Submission, provide a budget narrative.

- Briefly describe the role of any staff/faculty being charged against the grant for personnel, fringe, or contractual/stipends.
- Briefly describe the need for any equipment purchases. If specific purchases are unknown, but being budgeted for, describe the process for determining equipment and supply determination.
- Applicants should tentatively plan for one in-state travel arrangement as well as a tentative visit to NOVA's DCO program in Northern Virginia.

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

### 3) **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.

## **H. APPLICATION/SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Each grant application package must be submitted no later than April 26, 2024 11:59 p.m. to Chris.Blankenhorn@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, April 3, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. CST.**

Join link:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m8737bab1b4d52c65d542b73d7ba8f396>

Webinar number:

2632 787 0761

Webinar password:

PcnmNVTE435 (72666883 from phones and video systems)

Join by phone

+1-312-535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Access code: 263 278 70761

## **I. Funding Information**

### **Grant Period**

The grant period is May 15, 2024-June 30, 2025.

### **Funding Availability**

A total of \$1M is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the ICCB for grants to eligible entities for the educational purposes as outlined under this NOFO.

### **Funding Deadlines**

- Grant funds must be obligated by June 30, 2025
- Good/products must be ordered by June 30, 2025/received by August 30, 2025
- Services must be rendered by June 30, 2025
- Grant funds must be expended by August 30, 2025
- Final budget modifications are due by May 30, 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 the De Minimis rate.

## **J. REVIEW CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS**

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

## **K. Other Resources**

During the grant, grantees will be provided with technical assistance from the Illinois Community College Board and its partners including Northern Virginia Community College and various Advisory Committee employer members.

Resources that may be helpful in the development of your proposal:

<https://www.datacentercoalition.org/careers>

<https://www.centerofyourdigitalworld.org/>

<https://uptimeinstitute.com/resources/tools/data-center-career-pathfinder>

<https://www.internationaldatacenterday.org/career-tree/>

<https://www.datacentermap.com/>

An FAQ will be updated weekly and posted on the ICCB Grant Opportunities Page: <https://www.iccb.org/grant-opportunities/>.

Submit questions to Whitney Thompson, [whitney.thompson@illinois.gov](mailto:whitney.thompson@illinois.gov).

## **L. State Awarding Agency Contact**

Whitney Thompson  
Deputy Director for Workforce Education  
[Whitney.thompson@illinois.gov](mailto:Whitney.thompson@illinois.gov)