**Illinois Community College Board**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**5/14/24**

**With no CSFA number listed does WEI FY25 become an Intergovernmental Agency Agreement with ICCB?**

Yes. It will be an IGA. This particular project is only available to community colleges.

**Target Population – We have LPN students who started in the spring and will not complete it until fall of 2025. Can we continue to serve these students with FY25 money as they complete their program.**

Yes. Keeping in mind that the WEI is a program of one-year or less. Those who were enrolled can continue in the fall of FY25.

**Regarding the prison, etc. data, the link seems to have only state data. Is this acceptable or do we need to have local data?**

Yes, local data may be used to demonstrate the need. Applicants must document the source of data.

**Does this exclude Adult Ed students?**

No, this does not exclude Adult Education students if the students meet the meet the criteria as listed below.

The targeted population is adults aged 18 years and above, and 60 percent of the population proposed to be served through this grant must be African American. The intended population are those individuals who want to upgrade their skills in order to access higher wages and that are not currently enrolled in a program not withstanding existing WEI students.

**If an Adult Ed student is currently enrolled, but not in a degree seeking program are they eligible?**

Yes, if they meet the criteria as listed above.

**If a student was previously enrolled but stopped out, can they participate in this program?**

Yes. If they did not obtain a credential of one year or less, they can be enrolled in a WEI program. A suggestion would be to work with the potential student to ensure that the barriers to success are addressed given their previous stop out. The key question is “Are they currently enrolled in a college program? If they are returning and picking up the dropped degree seeking program, no. If they are returning to get a WEI eligible credential only, yes. This should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Would a student be eligible if they have been enrolled in the DOT sponsored Highway Construction program?**

The intended population are those individuals who want to upgrade their skills in order to access higher wages and that are not currently enrolled in a community college program not withstanding existing WEI students.

**Could you provide a couple of examples of a student being “on an educational pathway.”**

CNA: Sometimes it will not pay 30% above the regional living wage, but they may be on a pathway to an LPN program (educational pathway yielding 30% above the regional living wage). The applicant must show that the student is not stopping at a CNA and it is a part of an educational pathway.

**Does that apply to stackable certificates/credentials?**

Yes.

**Is it OK if they don’t finish the pathway in the grant period?**

Yes.

**How do we show the pathway?**

There is an attachment that will allow you to map out the pathway.

**If the median wage is 30% above the living wage, but the starting wage is below, would that be considered on the pathway?**

You will have to look at it on a case-by-case basis. You need to propose it in your application and will need to justify why it is not meeting the threshold and will need to show it is on an educational pathway to 30% above the regional living wage. However, the intent of the program is to get individuals to 30% above the regional living wage or on an educational pathway.

**What if the starting wage is below, but they will get to the wage once on the job as they progress in their career?**

The applicant is required to focus on meeting the 30% regional living wage or on an educational pathway to 30% above the regional living wage. The attachments provide the details regarding the median wage. There may be programs that may not be within the wage threshold that meet your local needs, but priority will be given to programs meeting the 30% above a living wage requirement.

**Will occupations on a pathway be viewed on the same level as a direct placement in a career meeting the salary requirements?**

The NOFO stipulates that the applicant must meet the 30% above the regional living wage **or** on an educational pathway to 30% above the regional living wage.

**Are bridge programs new this year?**

No, they were allowable in previous grant cycles.

**Is there a specific wage calculator we need to use? MIT has a good one.**

One of the data sources recommended is the MIT calculator. The NOFO also lists Lightcast as another data source, if your institution has a membership, as an alternative calculator. Other sources of data may be used such as local workforce data, chamber data, etc.; however, the source of the data must be documented.

**Will ICCB provide any new information about student stipend guidance this year?**

The information listed in the NOFO on page 10. Student stipends and tuition assistance, <https://www.iccb.org/wp-content/pdfs/grants/Guidance%20for%20Student%20Stipends%20within%20Grant%20Programs.pdf>

**Are the attachments included in the 10 page limit?**

No.

**Can we use our previous years success with WEI, for the Capacity, Experience and Equity Lens?**

Yes. Whatever past successes you have you can use them as part of the narrative, but there may be other things that you need to include for a well-rounded application.

**Does a student need to have been enrolled in WEI the semester immediately before the current semester to be considered eligible?**

No. They don’t have to have been enrolled in the program previously to participate. If a student is already enrolled, but will not complete, they may continue on as long as they complete their program within one year or less.

**If we have students who won’t complete by December 2025, can we count them?**

If a student doesn’t complete their program of one year or less in the grant year of the funding, they may be re-enrolled.

**This grant is just a year (plus a quarter) of funding, correct? There is no program-building time included, such as year one of a two-year grant.**

The grant allows a quarter for start-up. An institution may take longer in the development; however, the numbers proposed are the numbers that are expected to be achieved.

**It appears that WEI funds have been used at some institutions for the 2nd year of 2 year programs, like the second year of a Registered Nursing degree. This means that the WEI portion covers a program of 1-year or less, but it’s part of a degree.**

A student must start with the WEI program, at the beginning. A college must show how the proposed program is on a pathway to 30% above the regional living wage or on an educational pathway to 30% above the regional living wage. A reminder that the intended population are those individuals who want to upgrade their skills in order to access higher wages and that are **not** currently enrolled in a program not withstanding existing WEI students. All students must meet the requirements of the program.

**We have a significant number of students we'd like to have enrolled in a program due to the academic support we provide, in addition to the tuition and fees. This has caused a need for an additional section of the course to be added at the college for the WEI students. May we use WEI funds to pay for the adjunct instructor's salary (which is $2,975 for a 3-credit course in FY24), as in the past when we offer a "WEI section" for the students we cover tuition for?**

This is an allowable activity.

**To enter our WEI program, we enroll students who only wish to pursue employment after completing a 1-year WEI certificate. This is to ensure we hit the required metric of employment of completers.**

All applicants must demonstrate how they will meet the employment rate goal of 70% of those who complete the program.

**There is no required metric for students who do not want to pursue immediate employment, and instead want to pursue further education. We, therefore, do not accept students into a WEI program for Certified Nurse Assistant, who state they only want to take this as a pre-req for a 2-year Registered Nursing program. Since these potential students would not be employed until they finish a 2-year degree, we do not include them in WEI, since including them lowers greatly our employment target set by the state. Is this a correct interpretation of the requirements for the grant? Do we insert these into the narrative itself where it specifies or can we say "see Attachment A" and "see Attachment B" and literally attach them at the end of the narrative?**

All applicants must demonstrate how they will meet the employment rate goal of 70% of those who complete the program. In the table, there is a space for those who continue in education on Attachment A or B. The program is for the students and the idea of those students having the opportunity as well as reducing barriers. It is an institution’s decision in terms of enrollment in WEI; however, it is imperative that an institution document their enrollment policies for WEI.

**If included as true attachments, does this count towards the 10-page narrative limit?**

No, attachments do not count toward the 10-page narrative limit.

**Can someone explain the difference in what is being asked for in the areas shown below?  This is taken from page 6 of the NOFO.**

**Statement of Need and Targeted Population**

**Provide a description of the need for the proposed services/programs related to the industries/sectors. This must include an analysis of the need vs. demand for the workers and include documentation of the source.**

**High Demand Training Programs and Occupations**

**Provide a description of the proposed high demand training industry/educational programs for the proposed that will be offered, why the reason for offering these, and provide the citation. (e.g., local workforce data, local chamber data, Lightcast data, etc.) The training program must yield 30% above the regional living wage or on an educational pathway leading to 30% above the regional living wage.**

The statement of Need and the Target Population refers to the need relative to workers and employers as well as targeted populations to be served. High Demand Training refers to what does the data show as the high demand sectors. There may be some overlap.