



Illinois Community Colleges Enrollment Surges to Largest Fall-to-Fall Increase in 15 Years

Systemwide enrollment grows for third straight year and continues to outpace national community college growth rates

SPRINGFIELD (Oct. 23, 2024) – Enrollment at Illinois community colleges continues to climb for the third straight year according to the Fall 2024 Illinois Community College Opening Enrollment Report, released today by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

The Illinois Community College System’s opening Fall 2024 enrollment report recorded an overall increase of 7.4%, the largest fall-to-fall enrollment growth in the last 15 years, outpacing last year’s fall enrollment increase of 5.7%.

"Our community colleges are stronger than ever, and the proof is in the numbers," said Governor JB Pritzker. "The Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 rate of enrollment incline for the Illinois Community Colleges System is outpacing growth nationally and is the best we’ve seen in 15 years. According to a [report](#) released by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Fall 2024 community college enrollment nationally increased 4.7 percent from the previous year as compared to the 7.4 percent growth in Illinois. On behalf of the State of Illinois, congratulations to all our leaders, faculty, and students on this outstanding milestone!"

Systemwide, Illinois Community Colleges had an increase in both headcount (+7.4 percent) and Full-time Equivalent (FTE) (+6.7 percent) from the previous year. Only the Fall 2008 to Fall 2009 increase of 7.5 percent during the Great Recession was higher.

"Illinois Community Colleges are affordable, equitable, and serve as pathways to economic opportunity. They continue to adapt and innovate, by meeting students where they are, and delivering access to higher education in more ways than ever. This latest data reaffirms that our system is delivering on its mission, serving communities across the state and becoming an even more popular choice for Illinois’ students," said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham.

Statewide enrollment data shows 37 of 45 community colleges experienced an increase in headcount enrollment from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024. Enrollment growth can be linked to innovative programs that create more access to college level instruction including the Dual Credit program, which saw a nearly 20 percent increase in enrollment by academically qualified high school students that earned college credit while still in high school last year.

"Illinois' growing dual credit program is a game-changer, preparing students for the workforce and filling high-demand, well-paying jobs across various industries. Dual credit students, along with community college graduates, are the driving force behind the state's economic growth, demonstrating the transformative power of our education system and its vital role in building a stronger, more resilient workforce" said Keith Cornille, President of Heartland Community College and chair of the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents.

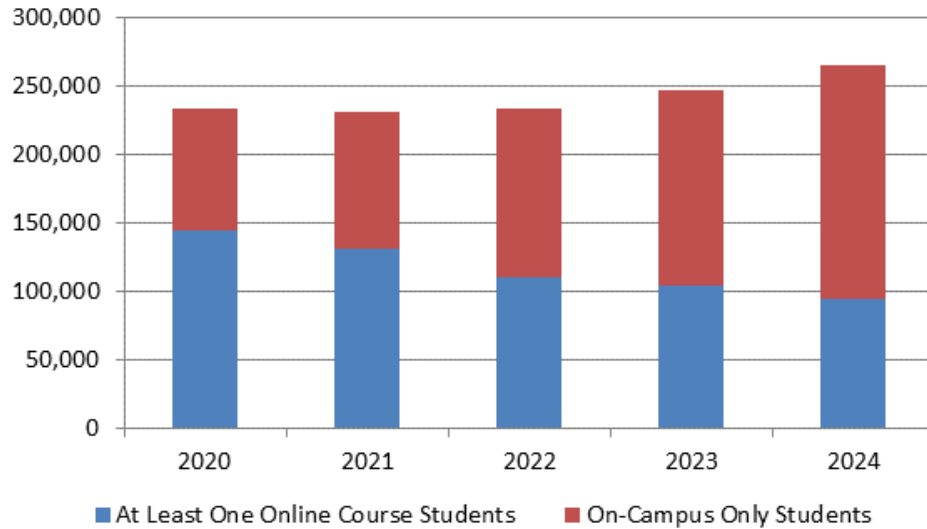
**SUMMARY OF OPENING FALL ENROLLMENT AT
ILLINOIS PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES FROM 2020-2024**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Headcount	233,777	230,490	233,758	246,931	265,227
% Change from Previous Year	-13.8%	-1.4%	1.4%	5.6%	7.4%
FTE	138,237	132,358	132,913	140,029	149,469
% Change from Previous Year	-12.4%	-4.3%	0.4%	5.4%	6.7%

“As the state's workforce development needs grow, more people are turning to community colleges for the broad range of certifications and degrees available across diverse, high-demand fields such as healthcare, transportation, electrification, culinary arts, and more. Our institutions are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of both students and industries,” said James Reed, Jr., Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association.

The new report shows more students are returning to the classroom in 2024. Online students, defined as students taking at least one online course, accounted for 35.6 percent of the overall student population in Fall 2024 compared to Fall 2023, when online student enrollments represented 42.3 percent of all students, in Fall 2022 represented 47.3 percent, and in Fall 2021 represented 56.8 percent.

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The full report is accessible online at https://www.iccb.org/data/?page_id=47.

About the Illinois Community College Board

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 550,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 39 community college districts which provide high quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.

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