

Illinois Community College Board

ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD GOALS ANNUAL UPDATE

An update and review of the progress on all of the ICCB Board goals occurs annually during the June Board meeting. An in-depth written report will be provided, and the highlights of the report discussed. As a reminder, the ICCB goal statement is:

The Board hereby supports and affirms the mission of the state's community college system in providing all Illinois residents with opportunities for economic and personal growth, civic engagement, and cultural awareness. The Board is committed to working with community colleges to ensure racial and ethnic diversity on our campuses and to promote inclusive learning environments. The system's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is essential to students' personal and professional growth and success academically, social-emotionally, and in the workforce. To meet this responsibility, the Board has committed to the following three goals:

GOAL 1: To support all students with a focus on minority, first-generation, and low-income students across urban, rural, and suburban communities, through the promotion of evidence-based best practices that close equity gaps resulting in system-wide improvement of equity metrics across enrollment, retention, advancement, and completion.

GOAL 2: To support a seamless transition for students into and through postsecondary education and the workforce by fostering the development of robust career pathways aligned to the needs of business and industry, strong engagement at all levels of the community college system, and with a focus on meeting students where they begin their educational journey, resulting in equitable access and outcomes for all students.

GOAL 3: To 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 equitable economic mobility through increased credential attainment.

The Board will implement its goals with a focus and commitment to equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all students. The Board will promote best practices, enable evidence-based decision-making, and support system-wide continuous improvement.

Every year, in June, the ICCB Executive Director provides a progress report to the Board on key initiatives related to the three adopted Board Goals. Not listed explicitly under the Board goals, but nonetheless core to the responsibilities of the agency is a set of fundamental activities that the agency performs at the behest of the Board and under the authority of the Public Community College Act. These core responsibilities are listed below with some key data points where appropriate. The update on the three Board goals follows, which highlights three initiatives across each Goal area.

- **College Recognition.** The ICCB approved four districts (10 colleges: City Colleges of Chicago (7 colleges), Shawnee Community College, Lincoln Land Community College, Illinois Valley Community College) during FY 2025 for Recognition. There are two additional districts (Harper College, Morton College) set to go to the Board in June. Similar to accreditation, Recognition is a statutory requirement for community colleges to be eligible for continued state funding.
- **Program Approval and Review in the System.** There are currently 4578 total active credit programs, including 4,283 CTE and 295 transfer programs in the system. This includes 1,228 AAS degrees, and 3055 certificates. There were 121 new programs approved since July 1st of 2024, an increase of 67 since the January 2025 reporting date. There have been 237 programs removed in this fiscal year. The Board has approved 296 new courses since January, with 877 approved since the beginning of this fiscal year.
- **Community College Funding & Grants Administration.** The ICCB continues to administer over 992 grants totaling \$524.7 million in fiscal year 2025, including 287.8 million for Base Operating and Equalization grants to the colleges.
- **Systemwide Data Collection and Reporting.** ICCB manages over 849 distinct final submissions from the colleges, with 759 submitted this year to date. This coordinated approach reduces the administrative burden on individual colleges. ICCB is also participating [Data Rescue Project](#) to stay engaged in national data policy discussions and support the preservation of critical data for benchmarking and strategic planning.
- **Partnership with the Office of the Governor and the General Assembly.** The agency serves as a resource for members of the General Assembly and assists legislators with addressing issues important to them and their constituents. Throughout the legislative session, the agency is deeply engaged with the GA on issues of importance to the agency and system, including but not limited to the Board's own legislative priorities. In addition, the leadership team works closely with the Governor's Office on the administration of programs and the implementation of the Governor's priorities.

GOAL 1: EQUITY

To support all students with a focus on minority, first-generation, and low-income students across urban, rural, and suburban communities, through the promotion of evidence-based best practices that close equity gaps resulting in system-wide improvement of equity metrics across enrollment, retention, advancement, and completion.

WEI: The WEI aims to expand access for learners who have traditionally been excluded from workforce opportunities, faced limited pathways to postsecondary education or career advancement, and have been systematically underrepresented in skilled trades and professional industries.

FY2024: WEI exceeded its African American enrollment targets and completions for the fourth straight year. FY21-23 hourly wage targets were met or exceeded. FY2024 targets are still being calculated. ICCB engaged the system via professional development and training through the 2nd Annual WEI Symposium. The agency also established an ICCB-IDES data agreement to evaluate equitable earnings and employment outcomes of WEI participants.

FY 2025: Now in its fifth year of funding (FY24), the WEI model is proving to be a successful methodology for achieving outstanding enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes. The sixth year (FY25) NOFO is out for application. In addition to the metrics required of the program (e.g. 60% African American students served, 70% employer engagement, etc.), the agency intends to better embed Essential Skills into programming to provide the important skills necessary to obtain and keep employment and expand on partnerships that will enhance the WEI program.

FY2026: Continuation Year (only currently funded programs can apply) Funding will support programs operating from July 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. This continuation effort seeks to sustain and expand progress made in creating short-term credential programs in high-demand sectors that lead to employment at or above 30% of the regional living wage or on an educational pathway to 30% above the regional living wage.

EQUITY PLANS: Pursuant to P.A. 102-1046 (110 ILCS 205/9.16), requires all public institutions of higher education to develop an equity plan and implement practices that, at a minimum, close gaps in enrollment, retention, completion, and student loan repayment rates for underrepresented groups.

FY2025: In cooperation with IBHE, the agency released equity plan guidance and reviewed submitted equity plans for the 45 community colleges in the system during FY2025.

FY2026: For this subsequent year, the agencies released updated guidance that requires institutions to participate in activities related to their equity plans (e.g. Communities of Practice, Targeted Technical Assistance, etc.). This work is being closely coordinated with the Governor's education team via the Higher Education Futures Table.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY (ECACE). The ECACE Act went into effect in July of 2021 to address shortages in the Early Childhood workforce. The act established a consortium of public institutions with Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs that are Gateways Entitled. This consortium is co-managed by ICCB and IBHE, alongside several other state agency partners. It also mandated the transfer of AAS credits for Early Childhood Education (ECE) and required that credit be awarded for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Since its launch, the consortium has agreed upon guiding principles for the work, and how to provide college credit for the CDA. Among other things, institutions created flexible options to meet workforce/employer needs – courses and programs at times, locations, and formats needed.

FY2024: The ECACE scholarship saw more than 4500 recipients and nearly 60m provided in scholarship dollars. The ICCB and IBHE also published CDA implementation guidance, the Annual Report, Mid-Year Report and an Enrollment Brief (all available [here](#)). Additionally, the ICCB provided staffing support to the legislatively required Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee.

FY2025: ICCB continues to support ECACE through ongoing support of the Consortium and Advisory committee. A focus of the work has been on working with IBHE and ISAC to update the parameters of the ECACE Scholarship, due to the significant reduction in resources available. In addition, several workgroups have been established including one on the Scholarship and one focused on Credit for Prior Learning. In addition to this work, there have been two reports released, including the: [ECACE Second Annual Report](#) (Jointly published with IBHE), and the [ECACE Scholarship, FY24 Brief](#). The FY2024 report is scheduled to be ready for release this summer.

FY2026: ICCB shall continue to provide support to ECACE through both staffing of the Consortium and the Advisory Committee. For this year, the agencies, alongside the consortium are required to update their enrollment goals, so much of the focus will be on revisiting these targets. Additionally, the group will

continue to manage through the scholarship process and facilitate workgroups. Another key area of concern is the management of the knowledge base, i.e., figuring out where the archival documents will be housed. The preceding year's agreement is expiring. Resources have become very constrained in this programmatic area.

GOAL 2: SEAMLESS TRANSITION

GOAL 2: To support a seamless transition for students into and through postsecondary education and the workforce by fostering the development of robust career pathways aligned to the needs of business and industry, strong engagement at all levels of the community college system, and with a focus on meeting students where they begin their educational journey, resulting in equitable access and outcomes for all students.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY. Adult Education includes instruction in adult basic skills, High School Equivalency preparation, English as a second language, and Integrated Career and Academic Planning programs (ICAPS), which are hybrid adult education and credit CTE programs. The mission and vision of adult education is to provide every individual in Illinois access to Adult Education and Literacy services. In Illinois, more than 1.15 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education, approximately 2.8 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English in their home. With these staggering statistics, it is important that services are available throughout Illinois that prepare adult learners to succeed. The agency currently distributes around 23 million in federal funds to the system, and 35 million in state funds, across various grants to 70 providers.

FY2024: The program served 60,129 students, across 70 funded programs (600 locations). These providers include 38 community colleges, nine K-12 school districts and Regional Offices of Education, two four-year higher education institutions, 20 community-based organizations (based mostly in the Chicago region of the state), and the Illinois Department of Corrections. This was a 13% increase from last year. 2018 was the last year adult education programs reached 60,000. Additionally, through the support of the agency's professional development network, a new Integrated Education & Training Model in Entrepreneurship was created. The operation of Workplace Literacy programs increased by 19% in FY2024.

FY2025: With a month left in the fiscal year, we have served 61,686 students (+18,587 since January), across 72 providers, just surpassing FY2024's enrollment.

FY2026: In addition to the good programmatic work done via this program agency staff will be collaborating with the adult education system and other national and state organizations to raise awareness of the detrimental impacts of President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget proposal outlining the elimination of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II Adult Education state grants, the source of ICCB's federal funding. These would be catastrophic losses.

DUAL CREDIT. "Dual credit" is an instructional arrangement where an academically qualified high school student enrolls in a college-level course and, upon successful course completion, earns both college credit and high school credit for the same course. Key elements include that the course must be college-level, aligned with the postsecondary curriculum, the instructor must meet minimum qualifications, and courses must be transcribed upon completion. Dual credit is governed by the Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act and ICCB Administrative Rules (Title 23, Part 1501.507).

FY2024: The FY2023 dual credit report is released in FY2024. During FY2023, 82,602 high school students enrolled in one or more community college dual credit courses, reflecting a 9.4 percent increase from the previous fiscal year and a 28.9 percent increase since fiscal year 2019. During the year, community colleges offered a total of 14,638 dual credit courses.

FY2025: The System recorded a total of 91,017 high school students enrolled in dual credit courses during fiscal year 2024. Annual dual credit enrollments increased 10.2 percent compared to the previous year (N = 82,602) and 31.3 percent compared to fiscal year 2020 (N = 69,299). This represents the largest enrollment ever reported for dual credit students in a single academic year. Additionally, the ICCB released 3million dollars in grants to colleges to support dual credit. These funds, while limited, enable the community college system to enhance and expand dual credit opportunities for underserved populations. All Illinois community colleges offer dual credit courses.

FY2026: The agency anticipates the passage of changes to the Dual Credit Quality Act that will clarify the right of first refusal for community colleges, the role of the ICCB in an appeals process, alongside significant data collection responsibilities around agreements between K12 and community colleges, and the staffing and administration of a newly formed collaborative committee of K12, community college, and union stakeholders to review and resolve potential challenges in dual credit. Additionally, as a part of the Funding Workgroup, dual credit costs on campus are likely to require engagement from the agency and Board. We also anticipate the continued growth of dual credit across the state.

DIRECT ADMISSIONS. One Click College Admit is Illinois' direct admissions program that automatically offers eligible students' admission to participating public universities based solely on their GPA. This initiative removes traditional barriers such as application fees, essays, and letters of recommendation, making higher education more accessible to all students. Some of its key features include automatic admission where students receive direct admission offers based on their GPA, no application fees, and a simplified process, where students create a Common App account, input their GPA, and receive admission offers directly in their dashboard. Every student will also receive an offer from their local community college, on the same list as the university offers of admission.

FY2025: The ICCB has been an ongoing partner with the IBHE and ISAC on the implementation of the direct admissions system, in anticipation of the Direct Admissions law going into effect. Our priority has been to ensure that community colleges are viewed as equal, viable options for students when given choices about where they are admitted. To do this, the agency worked with the Common App on the implementation of an Early Adopter program. Via participation in broader Direct Admission implementation efforts, the ICCB has spearheaded bringing community colleges onto the Common APP application portal. Since the previous quarter, the initial cohort of four colleges has been increased to seven, with another about to join. The goal is to include all 45 community colleges.

FY2026: During this next fiscal year, the agency anticipates working with the colleges to bring them onto the Common App platform, ensuring they are viewed as viable first choice institutions, alongside Illinois' public universities as a part the Direct Admission program. Additionally, the agency will continue to work with ISAC and IBHE on data transfer agreements, including the collection of college data on transfer students. In FY2026, the program will be expanded to include community college transfer students, with Illinois being the first state in the nation to take this approach to direct admissions.

GOAL 3: WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To 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 equitable economic mobility through increased credential attainment.

PIPELINE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE (PATH). The purpose of this project is to create, support, and expand the opportunities of individuals in the nursing pathway and select healthcare pathways to obtain credentials and degrees that allow them to advance.

FY2023: 15,578 students completed, meeting the goal of increasing program completions by 15%. 42% of completers were 25 and older and 45% of enrollees were first generation. Other outcomes include 27 newly developed healthcare programs and over 1000 employers engaged.

FY2024: A total of 25,055 students were enrolled in the PATH program at the end of Fiscal Year 2024, with 15,578 completers. Several apprenticeship programs in nursing and medical assisting were developed with support of grant funds.

FY2025: PATH is on track for meeting program goals for FY2025, with approximately 28,550 students enrolled (nearly 35,00 more than the previous year). Completion data will be available at the end of the Spring semester once data is submitted. The program also saw success with its Competency-based Education (CBE) Learning Community, which provided colleges with the knowledge and tools needed to develop CBE healthcare programs at their institutions. ICCB hosted four webinars with topics ranging from curriculum development processes and academic policies to CBE operations. The CBE Learning Community's culminating event is an in-person workshop at Parkland College on May 28, 2025.

FY2026: Given the timeframe of implementation and the length of time for student completion across some areas, FY2026 will be the first year we will be able to match employment data with PATH enrollees to measure employment outcomes for the project. Additionally, the program will expand its reach around CBE programs, enabling more programs to adopt and offer CBE options for healthcare.

REV UP EV! (ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE GRANTS).

The purpose of this initiative is to create and expand electric vehicles and related advanced manufacturing programs across the community college system. Cumulatively, over 17million dollars has been released on this program since its inception.

FY2024: The agency awarded 25 grants- 6 capacity building and 19 development and implementation grants. The ICCB also contracted with the Illinois Green Economy Network to create the EV Network. Two industry collaborative meetings were held, one focused on EV charging and the other focused on heavy-duty EV. This collaboration also created training and certification opportunities for faculty in partnership with Joliet Junior College, Weber State College (Utah), and Otago Polytechnic (Australia). FY2025: The ICCB expects 28 new programs to be developed, with 1,700 students to complete a credential, and 350 employers engaged.

FY2025: As we close FY2025, Rev Up EV's upcoming Industry Collaborative will be held at TCCI Manufacturing's new Clean Energy Innovation Hub in Decatur on May 28, 2025. There will be an expert panel to share trends and innovations in heavy duty EV and a session on career pathways in Artificial Intelligence, Information Technology, and Cybersecurity for Automotive and EVs. The event will send a critical call to action to community college and employer partners that are tasked with building the foundation for a future-ready talent pipeline for electric vehicle scaling as the state moves toward meeting its clean energy goals. The ICCB will receive updated numbers in July, but as of January, 238 employers have been engaged in the process with 29 programs being developed. 1150 students were enrolled.

FY2026: The agency anticipates continued growth and interest in this program, particularly as we broaden the scope to ensure more opportunities for those colleges engaged in Advanced Manufacturing programs.

NONCREDIT WORKFORCE TRAINING GRANT INITIATIVE. This initiative is a \$5 million grant that enables the system to increase investment in immediate, short-term workforce solutions that position individuals for career growth and that support companies with upskilling and other workforce needs through customized training and employer services. Colleges prioritize small businesses as well as women or minority-owned businesses.

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FY2025: The first round of this program was completed this Spring. Preliminary outcomes included over 1,600 training opportunities to over 8,764 individuals. Nearly 32% of those trained received manufacturing-related training. 14% of trainees were for healthcare-related careers. Nearly 450 small-to-medium sized employers (500 or less employees) received services and trainings. 4 million impressions, over 12,000 clicks, and 421 new leads were generated through the Behind Every Employer campaign, creating employer partnerships and broadening awareness of noncredit program offerings and business solutions offered by community colleges.

FY2026: In its next iteration, the project aims to increase the number of small-to-medium sized employers that receive services and to continue offering robust training activities throughout the system.