

**Early
Childhood
Access
Consortium for
Equity (ECACE)
Scholarship
Program**

September 18, 2023



Agenda

- ECACE Program Overview
 - Kim Eck, Illinois Student Assistance Commission
 - Christy Shields, Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- Q & A Discussion
 - Christi Chadwick, Illinois Board of Higher Education
 - Marcus Brown, Illinois Community College Board

ECACE Program Overview

- Provides funds for those currently working or have worked in the early childhood education field and are seeking additional credentials and degrees
- A recipient may receive an award amount up to total cost of attendance, after all other financial aid has been applied (last payer)
- The ECACE scholarship is not need-based aid
- Recipients are expected to continue or return to teaching or direct services in the early childhood care and education field in Illinois after completion of their program of study

2023-24 ECACE Scholarship Program

- This will be the third year of this federally-funded program
- The online application is available in the ISAC Student Portal
 - Priority access to funding date was August 7, 2023
 - Applications continue to be accepted
- Enhancements to eligibility have expanded access to the program for the 2023-24 award year

2023-24 ECACE Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for the ECACE Scholarship Program during the 2023-24 academic year, an applicant must:

- be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen (federal definition)
- be a member of the incumbent workforce, currently working or having worked in the early childhood industry (in either a licensed or license-exempt facility), including home-based child care (e.g., family, friend, neighbor), center-/community-based care, Preschool for All programs, school-based preschool settings, and Head Start programs, that serve children from birth to age 5. Acceptable positions include teachers, assistant teachers, directors, family child care providers and assistants
 - applicants must provide documentation confirming their current membership in the Gateways to Opportunity® Registry

2023-24 ECACE Eligibility Criteria

- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment on a full- or part-time (at least 3 credit hours) basis at the undergraduate or graduate level at a public or non-profit private 2- or 4-year Gateways-entitled and Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity member institution, and pursuing at least one of the following:
 - an Associate of Applied Science degree (or related certificate) in early childhood education *or* an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood at an approved college;
 - a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, with or without a Professional Educator License; or
 - for those who already hold a bachelor's degree:
 - courses to make them eligible for a lead teacher position in a licensed program;
 - a Professional Educator License with an Early Childhood Endorsement;
 - additional endorsements (Bilingual, English as a Second Language, Special Education) or letters of approval or credentials; or,
 - for those seeking licensure, and/or an additional endorsement, a Master's degree in early childhood.

2023-24 ECACE Processing

- Applications are categorized as Timely New, Timely Renewal, Untimely New and Untimely Renewal as they are received by ISAC
 - All complete applications, regardless of how they are categorized are considered when prequalifying applicants for program eligibility
- Prequalification results are available in ECACE system in GAP Access twice each week -- on Wednesday and Friday mornings
 - Only records for students who have completed the online application process and who meet all initial eligibility requirements are considered for prequalification
- Prequalified applicants who have been awarded are eligible for payment
 - A maximum award amount populates in the “Max Annual Award Amount” field in GAP Access
 - 2023-24 maximum award amounts are:
 - \$33,558 at four-year institutions
 - \$18,262 at community colleges

As part of the payment request process, additional eligibility requirements must be verified by the college

2023 ECACE Award Amounts

- Colleges must determine the term award amount(s) based on other financial aid the student is receiving
 - ECACE is last payer, after all other aid has been provided
 - May be used to replace student loans that might otherwise have been part of the student's aid package.
- For students who plan to attend different types of institution during the award year, the ECACE system will automatically calculate an eligible award amount based on the student's type of school listed on their application for each term
- For example, an award amount of \$25,910 would show as the maximum eligible award amount for a student at a four-year institution who is attending at a community college in the fall (first) term
 - Calculated by dividing \$18,262, which is the max award at a community college by 2 (= \$9,131) since the student is only attending there for the first term
 - The rest of the award is calculated using the max award of \$33,558 at a four-year institution divided by 2 (= \$16,779)
 - $\$9,131 + \$16,779 = \$25,910$

2023-24 ECACE Payment Processing

- Claims for prequalified students are submitted in the ECACE system in GAP Access
- By submitting a payment request, colleges are certifying that the student is enrolled and continues to meet all eligibility criteria
- A first-term priority payment request deadline date will be announced once it has been determined
 - However, colleges are encouraged to submit payment requests and to indicate if prequalified students will not be accepting their award as soon as possible
- A Payment Result Summary and Invoice Detail Report can be viewed or printed by selecting the Report tab in the ECACE system the day after a payment request has been processed
- Disbursement of funds is processed by the State Comptroller's Office, and payments are made on a monthly basis
 - Allow four to six weeks for payment processing

Certifying & Payment Request - ECACE System

ECACE 2023-2024: Student Detail: Payments

Home Application Student **Payment** Reports

List Eligibility **Payment**

Current SSN **Go**

Annual Award Amount
33558.00

Terms	1-Fall	2-Spring	4-Summer
School Code			
Request:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Enrollment Status:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Academic Level:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Program/Degree Pathway:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Ineligible Reason	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Requested Amount	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>

By submitting a payment request to ISAC, a college is certifying that the student meets all eligibility criteria.

Request:
Payment
Cancel
Ineligible
Delete

Enrollment Status:
Full time
Half time
At least 3 credit hrs

Academic Level:
Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
Graduate/Post Baccalaureate

Program/Degree Pathway:
Associate of Applied Science
Bachelor's Degree
Certificate
Master's Degree
Other Post-Baccalaureate Pathway

Requested Amount:
Enter term award amount(s) based on other financial aid the student is receiving

Ineligibility Reason - ECACE System

Ineligible Reason:

- Not enrolled this term
- Not a US citizen/eligible non-citizen
- Not a HS grad/no GED
- Defaulted student loan
- Not pursuing an early childhood education major
- Not make satisfactory academic progress
- Enrolled less than 3 credit hours
- Student is not accepting ECACE Scholarship
- No remaining unmet cost

If a college determines that a prequalified applicant does not meet all eligibility requirements, they report the reason for ineligibility.

Terms	1-Fall	2-Spring	4-Summer
School Code			
Request	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Enrollment Status	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Academic Level	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Program/Degree Pathway	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Ineligible Reason	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Requested Amount	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Activity Date			
Status			
Result code			
Expanded Result			

Not enrolled this term
Not a US citizen/eligible non-citizen
Not a HS grad/no GED
Defaulted student loan
Not pursuing an early childhood education major
Not making satisfactory academic progress
Enrolled less than 3 credit hours
Student is not accepting ECACE Scholarship
No remaining unmet cost

ECACE Disbursement

- Awards are disbursed per the discretion of the college.
 - There are no term limits, but the total requested for all terms cannot exceed the Scholar's annual award during any academic year
- ISAC authorizes a voucher in the amount of the payment invoice and submits it to the State Comptroller's Office, which issues payment to the institution.
 - Colleges can match the invoice number on the Payment Results/Exceptions report to the voucher
- Upon receipt of the scholarship funds from the Comptroller, the college should verify the student's enrollment status for the term for which the award was intended
 - The institution may credit the scholarship funds to the recipient's account for expenses due and payable
 - If appropriate, any credit balance may be returned to the recipient.
 - If the college must reduce the amount of the award so as not to exceed the cost of attendance, the adjustment should be made in the ECACE system
- If the recipient has withdrawn, the college must indicate the reason for not receiving the scholarship on the ECACE "Student Detail: Payment" screen.

ECACE Resources ecace.org

To locate
Consortium
Member List:

Hover over
Consortium
and click on
*Consortium
Members List*

The screenshot shows the ECACE website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ECACE logo on the left and several menu items: MEETINGS, CONSORTIUM, ADVISORY COMMITTEE, RESOURCES, FIND YOUR NAVIGATOR, and FOR MORE INFORMATION. The 'CONSORTIUM' and 'RESOURCES' items are highlighted with red boxes. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads 'EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY'. Underneath this heading is a mission statement: 'The Vision: Create a consortium to streamline, coordinate, and improve accessibility of degree completion pathways for incumbent early childhood workforce and employers.' Below the mission statement is a downward-pointing arrow icon. In the middle section, there are two featured cards. The left card features a tree logo with colorful leaves and the text 'ECACE EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY'. The right card features the text 'READ THE FIRST ANNUAL ECACE REPORT' and a 'Read Report' button. At the bottom of the page, there are logos for several partner organizations: IBHE (Illinois Board of Higher Education), ICCB (Illinois Community College Board), ISAC (Illinois Student Assistance Commission), Illinois State Board of Education, IDHS (Illinois Department of Human Services), and Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

To locate
Frequently
Asked
Questions:

Hover over
Resources
and click on
*Frequently Asked
Questions*

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated as of Wednesday, July 5, 2023

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) have received many questions about the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) and the work of this initiative. This document is designed to address those questions. This should be considered a working document, which will be revised as the initiative progresses. This is not intended as a policy manual or general overview of the work.

Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity

1. What is the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity and how was it created?



2. How is the incumbent early childhood workforce defined?



3. Which institutions are members of the Consortium?



4. How is "Prior Learning" being defined in this initiative?



Consortium Goals

1. What are the statewide goals for upskilling the early childhood workforce, and are there goals for each of the following – enrollment, persistence, and completion?



2. Can students who are in our Elementary Education program who earn an ECE endorsement (and are members of the incumbent workforce) "count" toward our goals?



3. Why do the Consortium goals focus on Credentials instead of Community College Certificates?



Consortium Work

1. What does the work of the Consortium include?



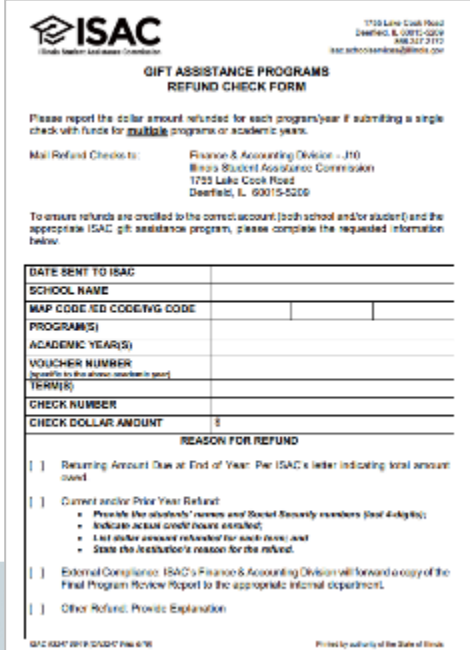
2. Do individual institutions have the autonomy and the support to develop their own



ecace.org/ECACE_FAQ.html

2022-23 ECACE Close Out

- Notifications detailing the outstanding amount that must be refunded to ISAC for 2022-23 ECACE Scholarships were been e-mailed to financial aid directors
- The appropriate amount – along with a completed Gift Assistance Programs Refund Check Form – should be submitted to ISAC no later than **September 29, 2023**
- Details about returning funds to ISAC and the payment offset and reconciliation process are provided in the Refunds and Unpaid Claims section of the Processes area
- isac.org/faas/processes/refunds-and-unpaid-claims/returning-program-funds-to-isac/



The image shows a 'GIFT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS REFUND CHECK FORM' from ISAC. The form includes the ISAC logo and contact information for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. It contains instructions for reporting the dollar amount refunded for each program/year and for submitting a single check with funds for multiple programs or academic years. The form also provides the mailing address for the Finance & Accounting Division. Below the instructions is a table for entering school and program information, and a section for providing the reason for the refund. The reasons listed are: 'Returning Amount Due at End of Year', 'Current and/or Prior Year Refund', 'External Compliance', and 'Other Refund: Provide Explanation'.

DATE SENT TO ISAC	
SCHOOL NAME	
MAP CODE (ED CODING CODE)	
PROGRAM(S)	
ACADEMIC YEAR(S)	
VOUCHER NUMBER <small>(specify to the school administrator)</small>	
TERM(S)	
CHECK NUMBER	
CHECK DOLLAR AMOUNT	\$
REASON FOR REFUND	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Returning Amount Due at End of Year: Per ISAC's letter indicating total amount owed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current and/or Prior Year Refund: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the students' names and Social Security numbers (not 4-digits);• Indicate ACES credit hours earned;• List dollar amount refunded for each name; and• State the institution's reason for the refund.
<input type="checkbox"/>	External Compliance: ISAC's Finance & Accounting Division will forward a copy of the Final Program Review Report to the appropriate internal department.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Refund: Provide Explanation.

ISAC 03/17/2019 02:02:47 PM 6/16 Printed by authority of the State of Illinois

ISAC Contact Information

School Services

866-247-2172

isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

ISAC Call Center – Student Services

800-899-4722

isac.studentservices@illinois.gov

Partner & Training Services

Kim Eck -- Kimberly.Eck@illinois.gov

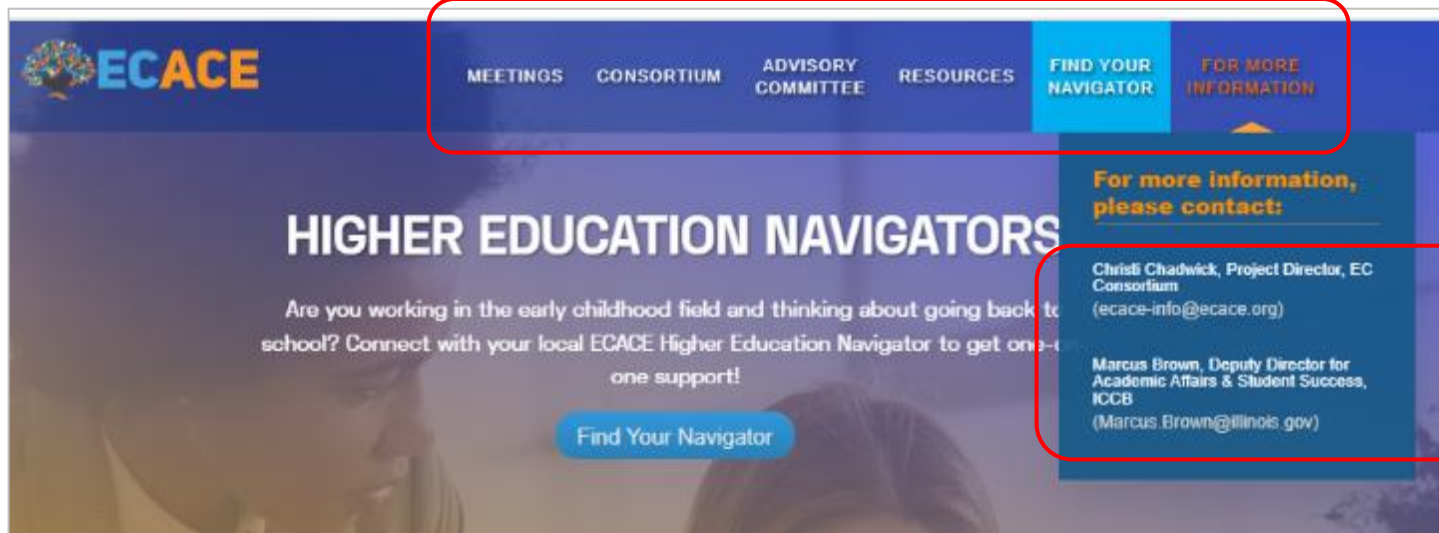
Stephanie Claudio - Stephanie.Claudio@illinois.gov

Daniela Rios – Daniela.Rios@illinois.gov

Sherry Schonauer -- Sherry.Schonauer@illinois.gov

Consortium Contact Information

www.ecace.org/ and ecace-info@ecace.org



www.ecace.org/Consortium_Member_Roster.html

The screenshot shows the "Early Childhood Access Consortium For Equity Consortium Member Roster" page. The title is "Consortium Member and Representative List as of July 25, 2023". Below the title is a table with the following data:

INSTITUTION	TYPE OF INSTITUTION	VOTING MEMBER	TITLE
Black Hawk College	Community College	Jim Mevillar	Chief Academic Officer
Ball State College	Public Colleges & Universities	Chris Riss	Professor, Chair of Education

Q & A Discussion

