

# The Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship and Other Financial Aid Options for Early Childhood Education Students

September 11, 2024



# Agenda

- Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship (ECACE) Program
- Other State and Federal Aid Programs
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)
  - Gateways Scholarship Program
- Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship (CELWS)
- Questions

# ECACE Scholarship Program

## *What's New for 2024-25?*

- The program is now funded by the State of Illinois rather than with federal funding
- Appropriation is \$5 million for Fiscal Year 2025 (2024-25 award year)
- The maximum annual award amount a student may receive is \$7,500
- Graduate students are not eligible for the scholarship
- ECACE will not be available for the summer term

# 2024-25 ECACE Scholarship Program

## *What has stayed the same?*

- The program is intended for those who are currently working or have worked in early childhood education and are seeking additional credentials and degrees
- Must be attending a public or non-profit private 2- or 4-year Gateways-entitled and Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity member institution
- The scholarship may be used for any cost of attendance component
- Intended to be last payer, after other financial aid has been provided
- 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
- Applicants are prioritized for awarding based on their Student Aid Index (SAI), from lowest to highest

# ECACE Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the program an applicant must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen or meet the undocumented student criteria of the RISE Act
- Be a member of the incumbent workforce, currently working or have 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 be able to provide documentation confirming their current membership in the Gateways to Opportunity® Registry
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment on a full- or part-time (at least 3 credit hours) basis at the undergraduate level at an ECACE member institution

# ECACE Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the program an applicant must:

- Be 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; or
  - A bachelor's degree in early childhood education, with or without a Professional Educator License
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress as established by the college
- Complete the application process on or before the ISAC-established date in order to receive priority access to funding
- Be certified as meeting eligibility requirements by the college at which the scholarship will be used
- Not be in default on any student loan, nor owe a refund on any State or federal grant

# ECACE Application Process

- When available, the ECACE Application must be completed online through ISAC's Student Portal
- ISAC sends confirmation to the applicant's e-mail address when the application has been received
- Applicants must also complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) *or*, if applicable, an Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid for the same academic year as the ECACE application
  - The ECACE participating college must be listed on the FAFSA®
  - The student must have a valid Student Aid Index (SAI)
- Students must reapply each academic year
- Due to limited funding, and the volume of applicants, the 2024-25 ECACE Application is no longer available
  - The 2025-26 application will be made available much earlier than it was able to be provided for this year

# ECACE Application Process

## *Required Documentation*

- An applicant must:
  - Provide a Gateways Registry member ID number and current Registry membership dates
    - Membership must be current to qualify for the scholarship
  - Submit an Eligibility Verification Form from the Gateways Registry
    - Applicants must download and/or print the form and then upload when completing the ECACE application
  - Provide information about their employment in the early childhood field, using information from the Gateways to Opportunity Registry
    - The Eligibility Verification Form contains members' employment history, with assigned position codes
- More information about the Verification Form and eligible codes can be found at: [isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/Application-Procedures/](https://isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/Application-Procedures/)
- To obtain the Verification Form, Registry members enter through the Gateways Registry Dashboard Login
  - If an individual is not already a member, they can complete their registration on the site and then obtain their verification form
  - Registry website: [registry.ilgateways.com/](https://registry.ilgateways.com/)



# ECACE Application Procedure

The screenshot shows the ISAC Student Portal website. The navigation bar includes links for Resources, Toolbox, ISACCorp, Program Applications & Status Checks (highlighted with a red box), Now Playing, and Login. Social media icons for Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube are also present. The main content area features a green banner with the text "Apply now. EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM". Below this, the "Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program" section provides a welcome message and instructions. A "Subscribe for updates" section is also visible, with a "START APPLICATION" button highlighted by a red box. A red arrow points from this button to the login form on the right.

ISAC Student Portal

Resources Toolbox ISACCorp **Program Applications & Status Checks** Now Playing Login

Apply now.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

### Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program

Welcome to the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program application.

Please read the important information here, and on our website, about the program and how to make sure your application is completed correctly before it is submitted. Before you start this application, it's a good idea to gather the documents you will need and complete the required Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) to prevent a delay in the application process. Refer to the [Completing the Application](#) and [Required Documentation](#) sections below for details. Your information will not be saved if you exit the application before completing and submitting it, and you will need to start over.

#### Subscribe for updates

Get updates about the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program and other college-planning information by subscribing to our [Student](#) e-Messaging service.

**START APPLICATION**

[studentportal.isac.org](https://studentportal.isac.org)

The login form is titled "Have an account? Log In to make the application process faster, or create an account for future applications." It features a close button (X) in the top right corner. Below the title, there are two tabs: "LOGIN" (selected) and "SIGN UP". The form includes two input fields: "E-mail address" and "Password". A blue "LOGIN" button is positioned below the password field. At the bottom of the form, there are two links: "Forgot Password?" and "Forgot User ID?".

Have an account? Log In to make the application process faster, or create an account for future applications.

LOGIN SIGN UP

E-mail address

Password

**LOGIN**

[Forgot Password?](#)

[Forgot User ID?](#)

# Employer Information

\*indicates required field

ALL APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

\*Are you currently or were you employed in the early childhood care and education field?

YES

NO

From:  To:

\*Gateways Registry Member ID Number:

\*Gateways Registry Valid Dates:

From:  To:

\*Position Code

This information can be found on the applicants Gateways Registry account and on their ECACE Eligibility Verification Form obtained from the Registry.

Applicants cannot proceed through the ECACE Scholarship application without the required Gateways Registry information.

\*Please Upload your Scholarship Eligibility Verification Form. Allowed formats are (PDF, JPG, JPEG, DOC, DOCX)

+ Upload File

Document Name	Document Type	Date Received (MM/DD/YYYY)	
No Documents Uploaded			

\*Select Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Facility

- DCFS Licensed facilities
- License-exempt facilities

\*Facility Name

SEARCH

\*Facility Name

SEARCH

Employer Name

Not Listed

- POKO LOKO CHILD CARE CENTER, INC.
- POKO LOKO DAY NURSERY SCHOOL

NEXT

\*Select Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Facility

- DCFS Licensed facilities
- License-exempt facilities

\*Facility Name

SEARCH

\*Employer's Name

\*Employer State

\*Employer Address (line one)

\*Employer ZIP Code

Employer Address (line two)

Employer Telephone

\*Employer City

BACK NEXT

Applicants will need to provide their employer/facility name.

If the Facility Name is not found, there is an option to enter the employer information.

# After Completing the Application ...

- Applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail when the ECACE application has been received by ISAC
- Different types letters are sent to indicate if the application is considered timely or untimely, depending on whether it was received at ISAC by the date for priority access to funding
- If an applicant needs to make a correction to their application, they will need to contact ISAC to provide the information
- Applicants must complete and submit both the ECACE application and the FAFSA (or, if applicable, Alternative Application) on or before the priority consideration date to be considered timely

# ECACE Notification Letters

- Examples of the different letters being sent to students throughout the process can be found in the ECACE section of the FAA area of [isac.org](https://isac.org) [isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/Application-Procedures/](https://isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/Application-Procedures/)

Home > ISAC Gift Assistance Programs > Early Childhood Access Consortium For Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program > Application Procedures

## Application Procedures for the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program

When available each year, applicants may access the 2024-25 Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program interactive application via the [Program Applications & Status Checks](#) area of the ISAC Student Portal. The online application has built-in edits to prevent errors, and ISAC sends **immediate confirmation** to the applicant's e-mail address that the application has been received.

An ECACE Scholarship application, listing the student's college of record, must be submitted for each academic year in which benefits are to be used. Applicants are also required to [complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#) or, if applicable, an [Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid \(Alternative Application\)](#) for the same academic year that they are applying for the scholarship. To determine eligibility for the scholarship, all ECACE-participating Illinois colleges

- ECACE Scholarship Program
- Program Overview
- Eligibility Requirements
- Application Procedures**
- ECACE Application Acknowledgment E-Mail
- ECACE Notice Of Application – Received Timely
- ECACE Notice Of Application – Received Untimely
- ECACE Notice Of Incomplete Application

[isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/Certification/](https://isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/Certification/)

Home > ISAC Gift Assistance Programs > Early Childhood Access Consortium For Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program > Certification

## Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program Certification

[Student List Overview](#)  
[Certification Overview](#)

### Student List Overview

Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program processing takes place through the GAP Access system. The availability of applicant data (via the Student List in the ECACE system) provides a means by which this information may be shared with colleagues in other areas of the college who are working with prospective and current students. Reports listing ECACE applicants may be generated and edited, and then made available to other departments at your institution. All personally identifiable information (PII), such as an applicant's Social Security number

- ECACE Scholarship Program
- Program Overview
- Eligibility Requirements
- Application Procedures
- Certification**
- Notice Of Eligibility
- Notice Of Ineligibility (Based On Applicant Data)
- Notice Of Ineligibility (Based On College Certification Data)
- Notice Of Insufficient Funding

# ECACE Notification Letters



## Timely Application Notification Letter

ECACE-100

### EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NOTICE OF APPLICATION RECEIPT

This letter is to notify you that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has received your 2024-2025 Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program Application. Your application was received on or before the date for priority access to funding, **August 11, 2024**, and it is complete. You will receive notification of your award status after that date has passed. Be sure the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend knows you will be enrolling and that you have submitted an ECACE Scholarship Program application.

Term	College Reported
1st Semester / Quarter	
2nd Semester / Quarter	
3rd Quarter	

If you need to make changes to your application information, instructions for doing so and program processing updates are available on our website, [isac.org](http://isac.org). It is your responsibility to immediately notify ISAC, in writing, of any changes to:

- your permanent home address and/or phone number;
- the college you indicated on your application; and/or
- your request to be considered for this scholarship.

ISAC administers other scholarship and grant programs that can provide financial assistance to help you pay for college. To learn more about the financial aid process and available programs, visit our website at [isac.org](http://isac.org). You may also communicate directly with an ISAC Student Engagement Representative via telephone at 800.899.ISAC (4722) or e-mail us at [isac.studentservices@illinois.gov](mailto:isac.studentservices@illinois.gov).

Program Operations  
Program Services and Compliance Division



## Untimely Application Notification Letter

ECACE-101

### EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NOTICE OF APPLICATION RECEIPT

This letter is to notify you that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has received your 2024-2025 Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program Application and it is complete. Your completed application was received after the priority access to funding date, which was **August 11, 2024**. Completed applications received after the priority access to funding date will continue to be considered for awarding as long as funding remains available after all timely, qualified applicants have been awarded. However, please note, it is unlikely that students applying after the priority access to funding date will receive an award in the 2024-25 academic year. Be sure the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend knows you will be enrolling and that you have submitted an ECACE Scholarship Program application.

Term	College Reported on Your Application (college of record)
1st Semester / Quarter	
2nd Semester / Quarter	
3rd Quarter	

If you need to make changes to your application information, instructions for doing so and program processing updates are available on our website. It is your responsibility to immediately notify ISAC, in writing, of any changes to:

- your permanent home address and/or phone number;
- the college you indicated on your application; and/or
- your request to be considered for this scholarship.

ISAC administers other scholarship and grant programs that can provide financial assistance to help you pay for college. To learn more about the financial aid process and available programs, visit our website at [isac.org](http://isac.org). You may also communicate directly with an ISAC Student Engagement Representative via telephone at 800.899.ISAC (4722) or e-mail us at [isac.studentservices@illinois.gov](mailto:isac.studentservices@illinois.gov).

Program Operations  
Program Services and Compliance Division

# 2024-25 ECACE Student List Eligibility: View Screen

- The **Student List Eligibility: View** screen in the ECACE system displays the list of eligible applicants who listed your school on their application as the college they plan to attend and whose applications have been reviewed by ISAC staff for completeness
  - Students were able to select a different school for each term, and they were able to leave the school selection blank for one term
- In addition to applicant data, this screen includes the application received date and applicant category, and will include the annual award amount and award date once awarding has taken place

#	Sel	Current SSN	Last Name	First Name	DOB	SAI	Transaction Number	Application Received Date	Applicant Category	Annual Award Amount	Award Date
1		XXX-XX-				15241	02	07/19/2024	Timely Renewal		
2		XXX-XX-						07/20/2024	Timely Renewal		

# ECACE Certification Process

- Some changes have been made to ECACE processing for 2024-25 to better align it with our other programs
- Schools must now complete a **Certification** process in the ECACE system in GAP Access (similar to what is done for the Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship program) before awarding can be done
  - Due to limited funding, we can no longer follow the “prequalification process” that has been used the last three years to continuously award to students throughout the year
- Colleges must complete Certification for each student on their Certification List in order for the student to be considered for an award.
- Only records that need to be certified display on the **Certification List**
- **All Certifications in the ECACE system must be completed regardless of whether the school certifies a student as eligible or ineligible**



# ECACE Certification List: View Screen

- To complete certification records for applicants on your school list, navigate to the **Certification List: View** screen by clicking on **Certification** tab
- Click on an individual student's name from the list the **Certification Data** window will open with the data fields
  - You may also use the **Filter** function to search for certain records

ECACE 2024-2025: Certification List: View

Home Student **Certification** Payment Reports

List Filter

Entries displayed 20

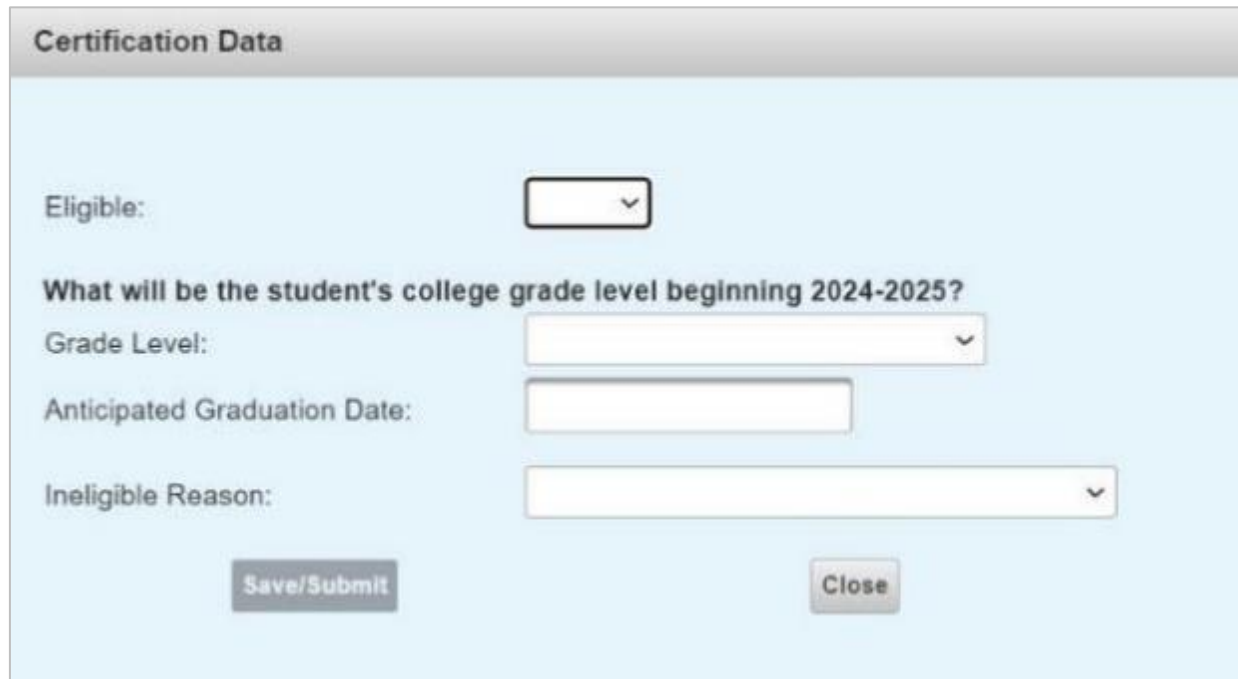
#	SSN	Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	School Code	Applicant Category	Eligible
1	XXX-XX-	K	B		00	Timely Renewal	
2	XXX-XX-	M	H		00	Timely Renewal	
3	XXX-XX-	M	A		00	Timely Renewal	
4	XXX-XX-	R	G		00	Timely Renewal	

Showing 1 to 4 of 4 entries

Navigation: << 1 >>

# ECACE Certification Process

- On the Certification Data Screen, the college must indicate if the student is eligible by selecting **Yes** or **No** in the first field



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Certification Data". It contains the following fields and buttons:

- Eligible:** A dropdown menu with a downward arrow.
- What will be the student's college grade level beginning 2024-2025?**
  - Grade Level:** A dropdown menu with a downward arrow.
  - Anticipated Graduation Date:** A text input field.
  - Ineligible Reason:** A dropdown menu with a downward arrow.
- Save/Submit** button (dark grey)
- Close** button (light grey)

- Once the data has been entered for an individual student, clicking on the **Save and Submit** button completes the process for that student and the applicant status information will update on the Student List: Eligibility View screen

# ECACE Certification Process

- If the student is eligible, select **“Yes”**
  - When the certification process first opened, the Grade Level and Anticipated Graduation Date were required fields if “Yes” was selected
  - However, ISAC is making an adjustment to make those optional fields for the remainder of this process
    - This is intended to help make the certification process easier to complete so that we can move to awarding more quickly

The screenshot displays the 'Certification Data' form with the following fields and options:

- Eligible:** A dropdown menu with a red arrow pointing to it from a menu containing 'Yes' and 'No'.
- What will be the student's college grade level beginning 2024-2025?** A dropdown menu with a red arrow pointing to it from a menu containing the following options:
  - Never attended college/1st yr
  - Attended college before/1st yr
  - 2nd yr./sophomore
  - 3rd yr./junior
  - 4th yr./senior
  - 5th year and beyond undergraduate
- Grade Level:** A text input field.
- Anticipated Graduation Date:** A text input field.
- Ineligible Reason:** A dropdown menu.
- Buttons:** 'Save/Submit' and 'Close'.

# ECACE Certification Process

- If the student is not eligible and “No” is selected, the school must provide an Ineligible Reason from the drop-down list that best fits the situation

The screenshot displays the 'Certification Data' form. The 'Eligible' field is a dropdown menu with 'Yes' and 'No' options. A red arrow points to the 'No' option. The 'Ineligible Reason' field is a dropdown menu with a list of reasons. A red arrow points to the 'Enrolled less than 3 credit hours' option. The form includes 'Save/Submit' and 'Close' buttons.

**Certification Data**

Eligible:

What will be the student's college grade level beginning 2024-2025?

Grade Level:

Anticipated Graduation Date:

Ineligible Reason:

Not enrolled this term  
Citizenship requirement not met  
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  
Graduate student

# ECACE Certification Process

- All Certifications available in the ECACE system must be completed regardless of whether the school certifies a student as eligible or ineligible
- The only way an applicant will receive notification of their eligibility status from ISAC is if the certification record is submitted.
- Currently, all timely renewal applicants with the lowest SAIs are appearing on schools' certification lists
  - Application review efforts have been focused on this pool of applicants for the first round of awarding that will be done once these have been certified by schools
  - As remaining applications are reviewed, they will be added to Certification lists and students will be notified, however, due to limited funding, many will not be eligible for an award
  - Additional records will appear on the **Certification Lists** as remaining applications are reviewed and considered complete and students will be notified

# ECACE Certification Process

- In some cases, a student will appear on the Certification List for two schools
  - This happens when a student selected a different school for each term on their application, or the student may have left one term blank
- Schools are expected to certify the student for the term(s) that the student selected your school, and schools will only be able to request payment for the term(s) for which you have certified to eligibility
- Schools will be able to see the school code on the Student Detail: Eligibility screen of the other school the student selected, and can check the list of participating schools to determine who it is
  - [isac.org/students/during-college/documents/2425ECACESchools.pdf](https://isac.org/students/during-college/documents/2425ECACESchools.pdf)
- Students will be in line to be awarded if at least one school certifies them as eligible
  - If neither school certifies the student, the student will not be considered in the first round of awarding
- To prevent any potential issues, we ask that schools complete all certifications as best you can with the information you have available so that no one who is potentially eligible is left uncertified

# ECACE Student Detail: Eligibility screen

Administration School Programs

ECACE 2024-2025: Student Detail: Eligibility

Home Application Student Certification Payment Reports

List Eligibility Payment School Update

Person Details Application Details

Current SSN  Go

Address

Date of Birth

Term	School Code	Term Payment Amount	Academic Level	Ineligible Reason	Request Mode
1	007694				
2	001758				

- The **Student Detail: Eligibility** screen allows schools to view an individual student’s application and eligibility information.
- This screen is accessed by clicking on the magnifying glass icon that is on the same line as the student’s name on the **Student List Eligibility: View** screen.

- Schools will be able to see the school code(s) the student may have selected for another term, if there is more than one school selection.

# 2024-25 ECACE

## What's Next? Student Award Announcements

- Once the Certification process is completed by schools for the timely renewal applicants, ISAC will begin the award determination process
- The first round of awarding will prioritize those who are timely renewals with the lowest SAIs
- Once awarded, a scholarship award amount and date will display on the Student List Eligibility: View screen.
- The maximum \$7,500 amount a student may receive may be divided among all terms in the award year, if applicable.



# 2024-25 ISAC Program Appropriations

- Monetary Award Program (MAP) – \$711,566,200
- Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois – \$10,750,000
- Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship – \$8,000,000
- Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment – \$7,500,000
- IVG and ING Grant reimbursement – \$6,000,000
- Social Work Scholarship/Repayment programs (combined appropriation) – \$6,000,000
- Human Services Professional Loan Repayment – \$5,250,000
- ECACE Scholarship – \$5,000,000 (new state funding)
- Nursing Education Scholarships (NES) – \$4,000,000
- Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship – \$2,000,000
- Dependents of Police, Fire or Correctional Officers – \$1,300,000
- Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship – \$1,100,000
- Illinois Teachers Loan Repayment – \$975,000
- Nurse Educator Loan Repayment – \$500,000
- Grant Program for Exonerees – \$150,000
- Veterans' Home Medical Providers' Loan Repayment – \$26,400
- AIM HIGH Grant – \$50,000,000\*

\* AIM HIGH Program funds are disbursed in lump sums by ISAC to public universities

# ISAC Gift Assistance Programs

- **Monetary Award Program (MAP)**
  - Eligibility is based on financial need
  - Covers tuition and mandatory fees at MAP-approved institutions
  - 2024-25 maximum annual award is \$8,400
- **AIM HIGH Grant**
  - Awarded to students at the 12 Illinois public universities.
  - Eligibility is based on financial need and other requirements established by each university.
  - Provides renewal grant assistance toward a full-time undergraduate student's cost of attendance at the university

# ISAC Gift Assistance Programs

- **Grant Programs for Dependents of Police, Fire, and Correctional Officers**
  - For spouse and children of Illinois Police, Fire or Correctional Officers killed in the line of duty
  - Provides assistance for tuition and mandatory fees
  - October 1 application deadline for full-year consideration
- **Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship**
  - Intended for children of energy workers who lost employment due to reduced operations or closure of a fossil fuel power plant or coal mine
  - Pays tuition and fee costs at public universities or community colleges for a period equal to one calendar year, including a summer term, for undergraduate or graduate study
  - October 1 application deadline for full-year consideration

# ISAC Teacher Programs

- **Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program**
  - Encourages academically talented minority students and/or qualified bilingual minority students to pursue careers as teachers at non-profit Illinois preschool, elementary and secondary schools
  - Maximum award amount is up to \$7,500 per year
  - Can be used for tuition, fees, room and board or commuter charges
- **Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Scholarship Program**
  - Encourages academically talented Illinois students, especially minority students, to pursue teaching careers, at high-need, hard-to-staff schools
  - Scholars qualify for up to \$2,500 or \$5,000, depending on the year in the program
- **Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver Program**
  - Purpose is to encourage current teachers and academically talented students to pursue careers in the area of Special Education
  - Exempts recipients from the payment of tuition and mandatory fees for up to four calendar years at any of the public universities in Illinois
  - ISAC awards 250 waivers annually

# ISAC's Military Programs

- **Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant**
  - Eligible applicants are exempt from paying eligible tuition and certain fees
  - Benefits are available at all Illinois 4-year public universities and public community colleges
  - May be used at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- **Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)**
  - Eligible applicants are exempt from paying tuition and mandatory fees
  - Benefits are available at all Illinois 4-year public universities and public community colleges
  - May be used at the undergraduate and graduate levels

# Federal Financial Aid Programs

- U.S. Department of Education (ED), Title IV Federal Student Aid\* (FSA)
  - Pell Grant
    - 2024-25 maximum award amount is \$7,395
    - Available to children of certain deceased military servicemembers or public safety officers
  - Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
  - Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant
  - William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program
  - Work Study
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
  - Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty
  - Chapter 31 -- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
  - Chapter 32 – Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP)
  - Chapter 33 -- Post-9/11 GI Bill
  - Chapter 35 -- Dependents Educational Assistance
  - Chapter 1606 -- Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve

# Other State Resources

## ISAC Student Portal

- [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org)



**ISAC Student Portal** Resources Toolbox ISACCorps Events Program Applications & Status Checks Now Playing Login

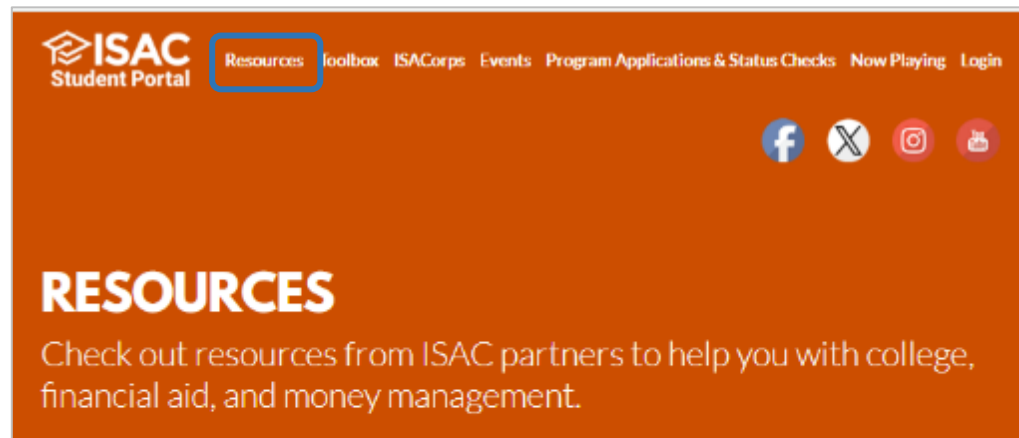
**COLLEGE PLANNING MADE EASY.**

Planning for college can seem pretty overwhelming, but it's a lot easier with the right tools just a click away. And it's even better when those tools are free! Use the ISAC Student Portal to help you choose a college, learn about careers, find scholarships, simplify the financial aid process, learn how to budget your money, and much more. You can even connect with one of our ISACCorps members for one-on-one help or to find a workshop in your area!

There's still time to complete your FAFSA®

*Get money for the college program that's right for you...*

If you tried to complete the FAFSA earlier this year and had difficulty because of technical issues, know that many of these issues have been fixed. Plus, ISAC offers free help statewide to assist you in completing the application quickly and easily. We can help you complete the FAFSA in as little as 30 minutes or less if you gather the info you need beforehand! Book a free virtual appointment with our ISAC FAFSA experts at <https://bit.ly/dhlmf3>. Learn more about the support we offer at [studentportal.isac.org/isaccorp](http://studentportal.isac.org/isaccorp).




**ISAC Student Portal** Resources Toolbox ISACCorps Events Program Applications & Status Checks Now Playing Login

**RESOURCES**


Check out resources from ISAC partners to help you with college, financial aid, and money management.

ALL



Appily (formerly, Cappex) [↗](#)

Get a jump on college planning and find the colleges you want and the scholarships you need. Use Appily to get matched with possible scholarships, to compare colleges, and to figure out your chances of admission at colleges of interest to you.



Claim your Future [↗](#)

Play Claim Your Future®-- a game that encourages exploration of education and training after high school, future careers, and money management.

### Resources

Partners and tools that we think will help you out.

[SEE ALL RESOURCES](#)



# Other State Resources

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

- [www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA](http://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA)
- <https://dceo.illinois.gov/workforcedevelopment.html>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the WIOA Works Illinois website. The browser address bar displays <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA>. The navigation bar includes a menu icon, Login, Sign Up, Search, Español, and Partners. The main content area features a carousel of six resource tiles:

- Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP)**: Local Workforce Innovation Areas
- ILLINOIS WORKFORCE INNOVATION BOARD**: Illinois Workforce Innovation Board
- WIOA WORKS ePOLICY**: WIOA EPolicy
- ILLINOIS workNet® CENTER** (americanjobcenter): Career, Training, And Employment Services
- Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity** (OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING): Economic Development & Workforce Services
- ICC** (ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE): Adult Basic Skills

Below the carousel, there are two main sections:

- WIOA Works Illinois**: WIOA Works Illinois is an online resource that assists business and industry leaders, policymakers, community organizations, and workforce professionals in achieving success under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This site will keep you up-to-date on state policies and programs, highlight local innovation by sharing best practices and success stories, and outline specific policies to ensure a skilled workforce for our state's employers.
- Events**: This serves as a public notice of meetings. Access logistics and materials with the event.



# Other State Resources

## Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)

- [ides.illinois.gov/](https://ides.illinois.gov/)
- [www.illinoisworknet.com/](https://www.illinoisworknet.com/)
- [www.illinoisworknet.com/Training/Pages/TrainingGuide.aspx](https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Training/Pages/TrainingGuide.aspx)
- <https://portal.il.cis360.org/>



### Find a Career

IDES can help you find your next career. Visit [illinoisjoblink.com](https://illinoisjoblink.com) today to search 100,000+ jobs. If you've applied for unemployment benefits, you already have an [illinoisjoblink.com](https://illinoisjoblink.com) account!

[ILLINOISJOBLINK.COM >](#)

[ILLINOIS CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEM >](#)

[JOBS & WORKFORCE >](#)

[ILLINOIS WORKNET >](#)

[VETERAN SERVICES >](#)

Take ownership over your career and education planning with our guided path of self-surveys, research, and action plans to help get ready for your new career.

 <h4>Identify Career Path</h4> <p>One of the best ways to explore careers is to understand more about yourself. Use nine self-surveys to discover career areas that match interests, values, and goals.</p>	 <h4>Localized Career Data</h4> <p>Current data for Wages, Employment Outlook, and Colleges are updated annually by our data analysts. Use accurate and reliable data to make informed decisions.</p>	 <h4>Job Search and Success</h4> <p>Career Plan empowers students to discover, explore, plan, and seek. A guided sequence of activities include job shadowing, informational interviews, financial planning, and more.</p>
 <h4>Workplace Employability Skills</h4> <p>Employability skills are things like professional behavior and collaboration. These are what employers look for when hiring. Our self-surveys and Career Plan activities focus on developing these important skills.</p>	 <h4>Resume and Cover Letter</h4> <p>Resumes and Cover Letters work together to make a candidate stand out to a potential employer. Our builder helps students create these important documents and keep them up-to-date.</p>	 <h4>Scholarships</h4> <p>Our database of over 2,000 scholarships is updated each year. Use Career Plan activities to research scholarships, learn financial aid tips, and explore the FAFSA.</p>

 <h4>IL CIS360 Junior</h4> <p>Skills and self-awareness, goals, interests, and values</p>	 <h4>IL CIS360 High School</h4> <p>High school self-awareness, interests, values, and career exploration</p>
 <h4>IL CIS360 College</h4> <p>Identifying careers, exploring jobs and interests, and navigating options</p>	 <h4>IL CIS360 Job Seeker</h4> <p>Career evaluation, employment skills, and exploring career options</p>



# ISAC's Student Engagement & Support Services

For inquiries from students, parents, and the general public

Phone: **800-899-ISAC** (4722)

Fax: 847-831-8549

E-mail: [isac.studentservices@illinois.gov](mailto:isac.studentservices@illinois.gov)

Spanish-speaking counselors are available  
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CT

# ISAC's Partner Services Department

- Provides training, program information, policy guidance and support to schools and other ISAC partners
- Partners with ILASFAA and other professional organizations
- Responds to school inquiries, both colleges and high schools

Phone: **866-247-2172**

Fax: 847-831-8549

E-mail: [isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov](mailto:isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov)

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## Partner Services Staff

Stephanie Claudio, [Stephanie.Claudio@illinois.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Claudio@illinois.gov)

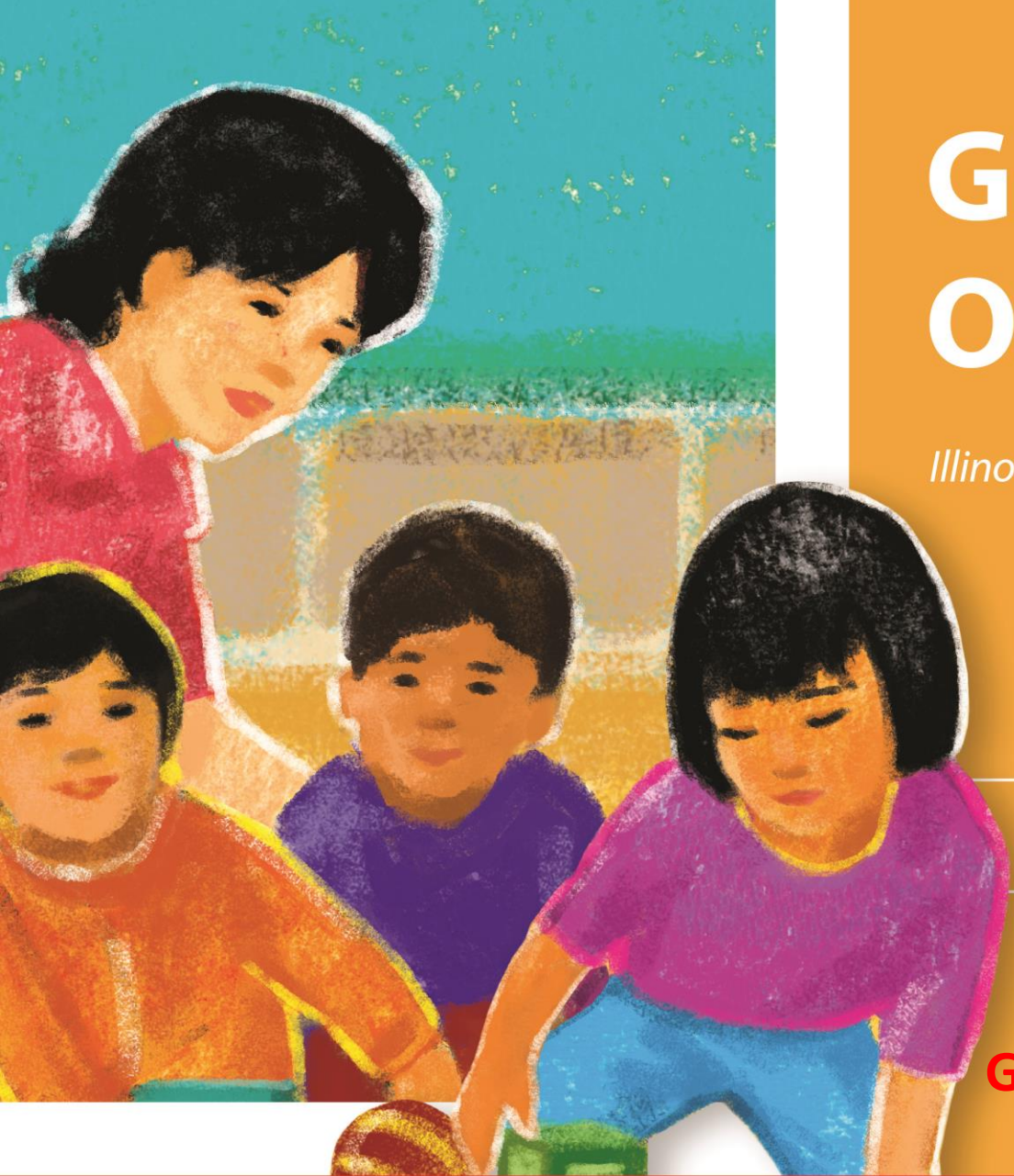
Kim Eck, [Kimberly.Eck@illinois.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Eck@illinois.gov)

Daniela Rios, [Daniela.Rios@illinois.gov](mailto:Daniela.Rios@illinois.gov)

Sherry Schonauer, [Sherry.Schonauer@illinois.gov](mailto:Sherry.Schonauer@illinois.gov)

# Questions





# Gateways to Opportunity<sup>®</sup>

*Illinois Professional Development System*

[www.ilgateways.com](http://www.ilgateways.com)

**Gateways Scholarship Program**

# Gateways Scholarship Program

- Helps pay for...
- Who can apply?

# Eligibility Requirements

- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) Licensed Program
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Funded PFA



# How much will Gateways Scholarship pay?

% of Tuition Gateways Scholarship Program Would Pay	Applicant Responsibility to College or University	Hourly Wage
100%	0%	up to \$4.25 over Illinois State Minimum Wage
90%	10%	\$4.26 to \$7.00 over Illinois State Minimum Wage
80%	20%	\$7.01 to \$10.00 over Illinois State Minimum Wage
70%	30%	\$10.01 to \$13.00 over Illinois State Minimum Wage
60%	40%	\$13.01 to \$16.00 over Illinois State Minimum Wage

*Gateways Scholarship Program will not pay out of district costs.*

*Scale based on a 40-hour work week.*

Minimum wage	Gross Yearly Wage Range +\$4.25 100% covered	Gross Yearly Wage Range +\$4.26-\$7.00 90% covered	Gross Yearly Wage Range +\$7.01 -+\$10.00 80% covered	Gross Yearly Wage Range +\$10.01- \$13.00 70% covered	Gross Yearly Wage Range +\$13.01-\$16.00 60% covered
2024 - \$14.00	\$14.00-\$18.25 \$37,960	\$18.26-\$21.00 \$37,980.80- \$43,680.00	\$21.01-\$24.00 \$43,700.8 - \$49,920.0	\$24.01-\$27.00 \$49,940.80 - \$56,160.00	\$27.01-\$30.00 \$56,180.80 - \$62,400.00
2025 - \$15.00	\$15.00-\$19.25 \$40,040	\$19.26-\$22.00 \$40,060.80-\$45,760.00	\$22.01-\$25.00 \$45,780.80 -\$52,000.00	\$25.01-\$28.00 \$52,020.80 -\$58,240.00	\$28.01-\$31.00 \$58,260.80 - \$64,480.00



# Application Process

Application information for the Gateways Scholarship Program is on the Gateways to Opportunity website ([www.ilgateways.com](http://www.ilgateways.com)).

- Complete and submit the application.
- Refer to the application checklist for additional documentation to submit.

# Work Commitment

Gateways Scholarship recipients must make a commitment to work in the field of early care and education.

- 6 months per coursework contract
- 1 year for completing a degree, certificate, or endorsement

**Gateways Scholarship Program FAQs**

**AND**

**Gateways Scholarship Work  
Commitment FAQs**

# Participating Institutions



# Partnership with Institutions

## Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - signed each new contract period.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Between INCCRRA and <Community College>  
For Administration of the Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program  
Effective July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025

### PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:

- <Community College> agrees to assist students with the financial aid process.
- <Community College> will arrange an invoice procedure, charging the Gateways Scholarship Program for approved coursework tuition of identified Gateways Scholarship recipients, and students any remaining tuition and fees.
- <Community College> will allocate MAP Grants to Gateways Scholarship Program recipient(s) prior to submitting invoices to INCCRRA. The allocation of MAP Grants should be indicated on invoices to INCCRRA.
- <Community College> will invoice the Gateways Scholarship Program at INCCRRA no later than 30 days from the end of each school term, and no later than June 30, 2025. The Gateways Scholarship Program cannot guarantee payment for invoices received later than 30 days from the end of each school term, and after June 30, 2025.

### Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program:

- Gateways Scholarship Program will provide tuition payments for a maximum of 15 credit hours per year over 3 school terms (or 23 quarter hours over 4 school terms) for approved scholarship recipients.
- Gateways Scholarship Program will provide <Community College> with the names of approved scholarship recipients on an on-going basis.
- Gateways Scholarship Program will provide information each term on scholarship recipient's coursework approved for payment by the Program. *Course authorizations will be sent via email unless specified otherwise.*
- Gateways Scholarship Program will pay <Community College> a percentage, up to 100%, of the approved coursework tuition, not including fees and books.
- INCCRRA and <Community College> reserve the right to modify the terms of this Memo of Understanding at any time.
- INCCRRA and <Community College> may terminate this Memo of Understanding upon 30 days written notice to the other party.

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Community College> Representative printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Harris, Executive Director Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
<Community College> Representative signature Date

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Between INCCRRA and <School>  
For Administration of the Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program  
Effective July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

### Participating Institutions:

- <School> agrees to confirm a minimum of 55 semester (or 82 quarter) credit hours of transferable/ articulated coursework earned at the community college level for individuals applying for admission to the university, and acceptance in the Early Childhood/Child Development degree program.

Students with a conferred associate degree or who are currently enrolled as a Junior or higher at <School> are also eligible to apply for the Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program.

- <School> agrees to assist students with the financial aid process.
- <School> will arrange an invoice procedure, charging the Gateways Scholarship Program for approved coursework tuition of identified Gateways Scholarship recipients, and charging students any remaining tuition and fees.
- <School> will allocate MAP Grants to Gateways Scholarship Program recipient(s) prior to submitting invoices to INCCRRA. The allocation of MAP Grants should be indicated on invoices to INCCRRA.
- <School> will invoice the Gateways Scholarship Program at INCCRRA no later than 30 days from the end of each school term, and no later than June 30, 2025. The Gateways Scholarship Program cannot guarantee payment for invoices received later than 30 days from the end of each school term, and after June 30, 2025.

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- INCCRRA and <School> reserve the right to modify the terms of this Memo of Understanding at any time.
- INCCRRA and <School> may terminate this Memo of Understanding upon 30 days written notice to the other party.

\_\_\_\_\_  
<School> Representative printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Harris, Executive Director- INCCRRA Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
<School> Representative signature Date

# Marketing Materials

Gateways to Opportunity Brochure





**Website:**

[www.ilgateways.com](http://www.ilgateways.com)

**Email:**

[scholarship@ilgateways.com](mailto:scholarship@ilgateways.com)



**CHICAGO EARLY LEARNING**

**WORKFORCE**

**SCHOLARSHIP**





## Advance Your Career in Early Childhood Education!

Are you interested in either becoming an ECE professional or advancing in your career as an ECE professional at no cost?

**This scholarship covers 100% of your tuition and up to \$250 per course in books** to support your pursuit of a college degree, credential, endorsement, or ECE licensure.



The Workforce Scholarship application window opens in January

### How can you benefit from the Workforce Scholarship?

- 100% Tuition Covered + Money for Books
- 1:1 Scholarship Advising
- Ongoing Support through Program Completion
- Community Building + Networking

### Get matched with the right higher education program to meet you where you're at in your ECE path:

- Basic & Advanced Professional Certificates
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Professional Educator's License
- Coursework to earn: Endorsement | Gateways Credentials

### Who's Eligible for the Workforce Scholarship?

- Current Chicago Early Learning staff
- Chicago residents interested in becoming early childhood educators

The Workforce Scholarship isn't just for preschool teachers! It's for all ECE professionals and anyone who lives in Chicago who wants to enter the ECE workforce.



Don't delay! Scholarships are awarded on a first-come basis.

Learn more and apply at [ChicagoEarlyLearning.org/Scholarships](https://ChicagoEarlyLearning.org/Scholarships)



## ¡Avance su carrera en la Educación Temprana!

¿Está interesado en convertirse en un profesional de ECE (Educación Temprana) o avanzar su carrera como profesional de ECE (Educación Temprana) sin costo alguno?

**Esta beca cubre el 100% de su matrícula y hasta \$250 por curso en libros** para apoyar su búsqueda de un título universitario, credential, aprobación o licencia ECE (Educación Temprana).



La ventana de la solicitud de becas Workforce se abre en enero

### ¿Cómo puede beneficiarse de la Beca Workforce?

- 100% de matrícula cubierta + dinero para libros
- Asesoramiento personalizado 1:1
- Apoyo continuo hasta la finalización del programa
- Cultura de convivencia + interconexión profesional

### Emparejamiento con el programa académico más adecuado para su camino en la carrera de ECE:

- Certificados profesionales básicos y avanzados
- Título Asociado
- Título Universitario / Licenciatura
- Licencia de educador profesional
- Trabajo de curso: Aprobaciones | Credenciales de Gateways

### ¿Quién es elegible para la beca Workforce?

- Personal actual de Chicago Early Learning
- Residentes de Chicago interesados en convertirse en educadores de la primera infancia

¡La Beca Workforce no es solo para maestros preescolares! Es para todos los profesionales de ECE y cualquier persona que viva en Chicago y quiera ingresar a la fuerza laboral de ECE.



¡No se demore! Las becas se otorgan en orden de llegada.

Infórmate y aplica en [ChicagoEarlyLearning.org/Scholarships](https://ChicagoEarlyLearning.org/Scholarships)

# GOALS

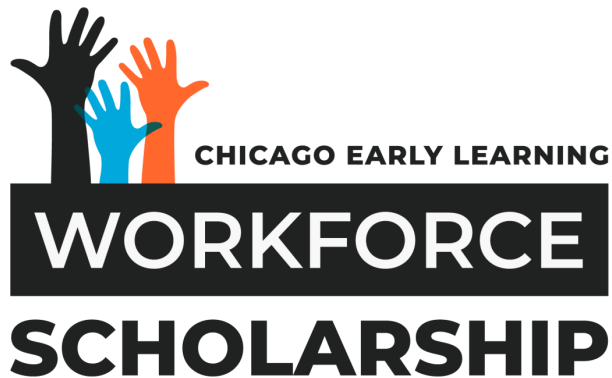
City agencies collaborated to launch the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship (CELWS) initiative in 2018.



**HARRY S TRUMAN COLLEGE**  
CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO



- CELWS aims to support Chicagoans and the current Chicago Early Learning workforce as they pursue coursework to earn a credential, degree, endorsement, or licensure to work with young children (birth through Pre-k) and families in Chicago Early Learning programs.
- The scholarship serves an important role in Chicago's efforts to expand access to early learning across the city and build a more robust workforce that can help Chicago expand high quality early learning programs.
- CELWS provides recipients with meaningful career pathways through partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education, which also offer students personalized supports as they navigate their desired course of study.



- How to Apply: Mid-January to February, applications can be completed on the *Chicago Early Learning* website. Once complete, the applicant will receive follow-up from Screening team (INCCRRA).
- Amount: The scholarship will serve as a “last dollar” scholarship, meaning it will cover everything that students’ federal grants and other scholarships do not cover.
  - Tuition & eligible fees at 100%
  - Books up to \$250/course
- 3-year work commitment: Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship recipients must commit to work in a Chicago Early Learning (CEL) Program (Community-based organization or CPS birth through Pre-K program) for a minimum of three years after completion of their degree or approved academic program.

# WHY CELWS?



FROM CHICAGO FOR  
CHICAGO



ECE RECRUITMENT &  
RETENTION STRATEGY



SERVES COMPREHENSIVE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD



FOR CHICAGO'S ECE FIELD

Are you a  
resident of  
Chicago?



If not, do you  
work in a Chicago  
Early program?

FOR THE WHOLE ECE FIELD

## Early Learning profession: Prenatal to Pre-K

Teachers  
(in-classroom)

Home Visitors

Family Support  
Roles

Administrators

### Chicago Public Schools (CPS) programs

Age Group: 3 and 4

Many CPS elementary schools offer early learning programs as a part of their services.



### Community Early Learning programs

Age Group: Birth to 4

Neighborhood locations provide early childhood education and infant and toddler care. Hours vary by site.



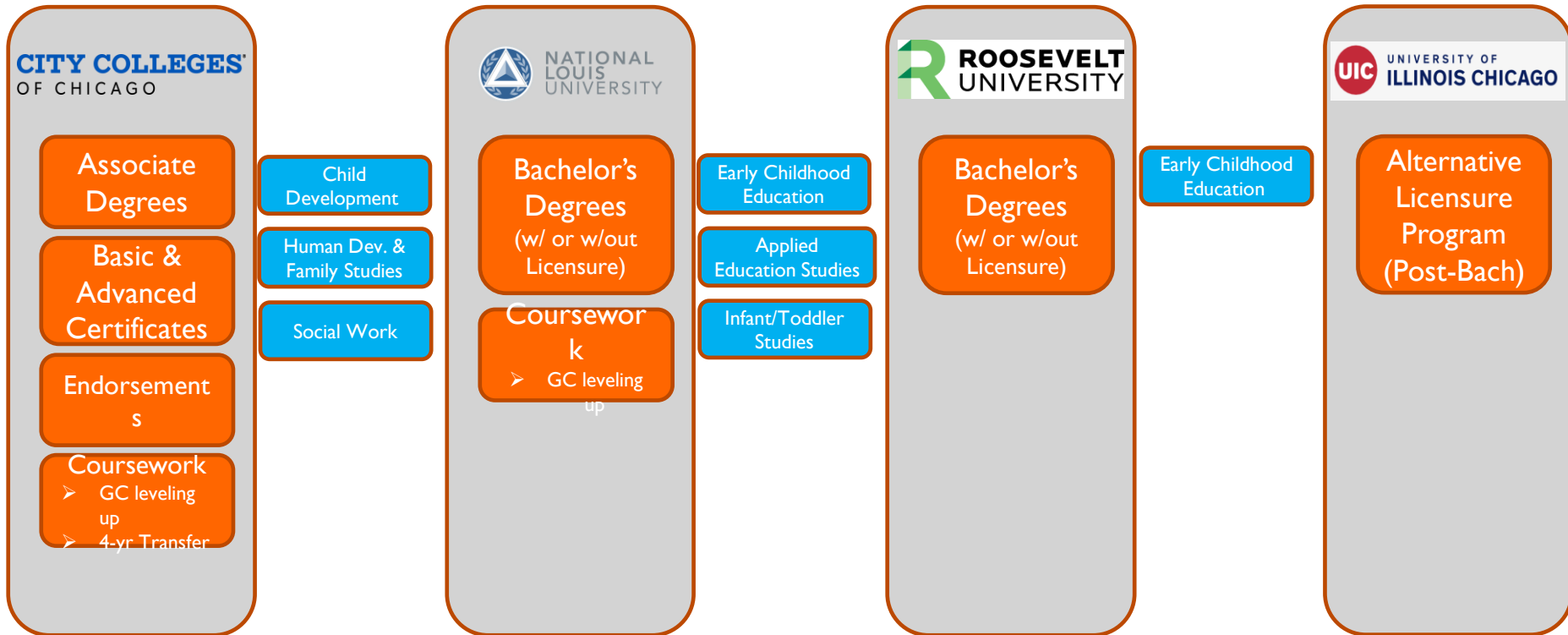
### Home visiting programs

Age Group: Prenatal/Birth to 3

Certified coaches provide early care and consulting in the family's home.



# COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY PARTNERS





# Convenient Locations

With locations across the city there is a wide range of class times: Morning, Evening, Weekend, Zoom.

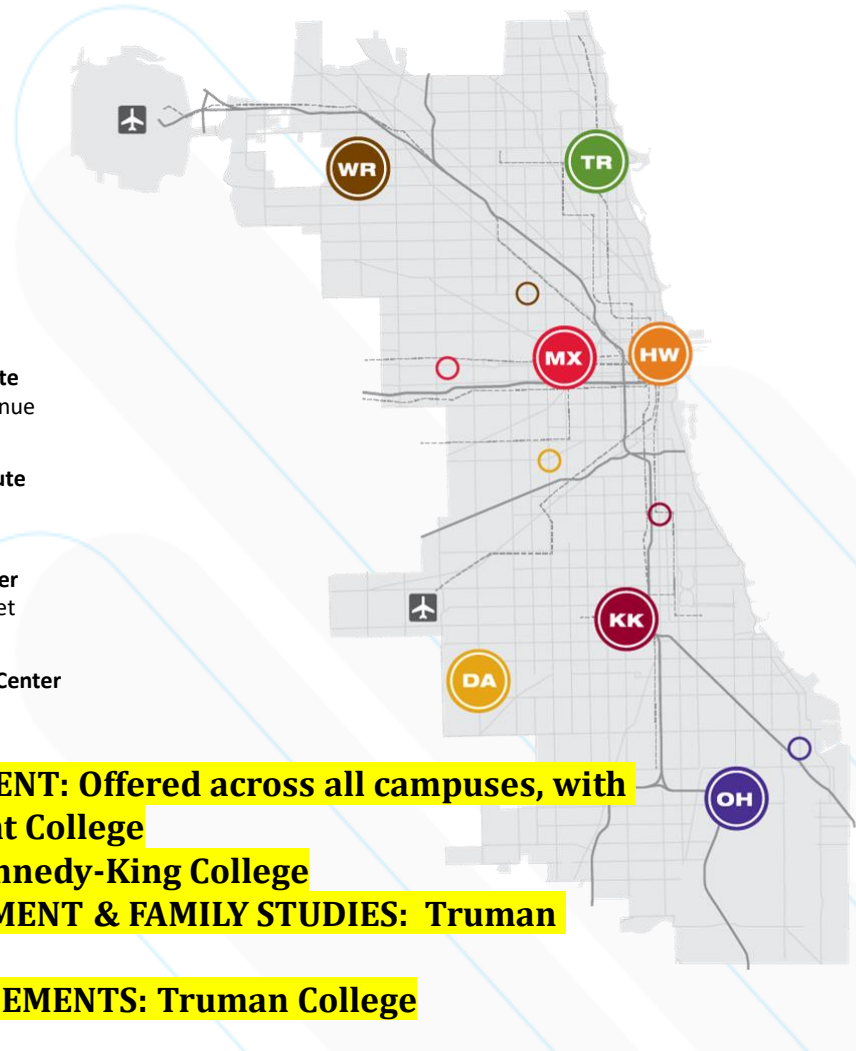
## COLLEGES

- DA** Richard J. Daley College  
7500 South Pulaski Road
- KK** Kennedy-King College  
6301 South Halsted Street
- MX** Malcolm X College  
1900 West Jackson Boulevard
- OH** Olive-Harvey College  
10001 South Woodlawn Avenue
- TR** Harry S Truman College  
1145 West Wilson Avenue
- HW** Harold Washington College  
30 East Lake Street

## SATELLITES

- Arturo Velasquez Institute**  
2800 South Western Avenue
- Dawson Technical Institute**  
3901 South State Street
- West Side Learning Center**  
4624 West Madison Street
- South Chicago Learning Center**  
3055 East 92 Street

- CHILD DEVELOPMENT: Offered across all campuses, with exception of Wright College**
- SOCIAL WORK: Kennedy-King College**
- HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & FAMILY STUDIES: Truman College**
- POST-PEL ENDORSEMENTS: Truman College**

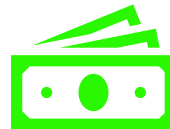


CITY OF CHICAGO



## **I: I Scholarship Advising**

- Early Childhood expertise
- Navigation of college/university
- Liaison to services at college/university
- Ensure good academic standing
- Holistic approach



## **Comprehensive Fiscal Supports**

- AA/AAS→BA Transfer Scholarships
- Alternative Licensure → ESL/Bilingual Endorsement Scholarships
- Content exam fee coverage
- Transcript fee coverage upon graduation/completion



## **Community-building: Access to other Scholars**

- Onboarding
- IHE orientations
- CELWS *Connects* sessions
- Networking events*
- Career/job fairs*

# FAQS

- Q: When do I apply for a Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship?
- A: Applications open in mid-January every year
- Q: How long may I participate in the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship program?
- A: CELWS will support awardees through Academic program/Degree attainment, contingent on funding, as long as students meet following requirements:
  - Maintain Good Standing and Continued Enrollment at your selected college/university
  - Earn a GPA of 2.0 or higher
  - Commit to work in a birth through Pre-K Chicago Early Learning Program (community-based organization or Chicago Public School) for three years after completion of the academic program or degree
- Q: How many credits can I be registered for?
- A: Maximum of 15 semester hours or 23 quarter hours per term

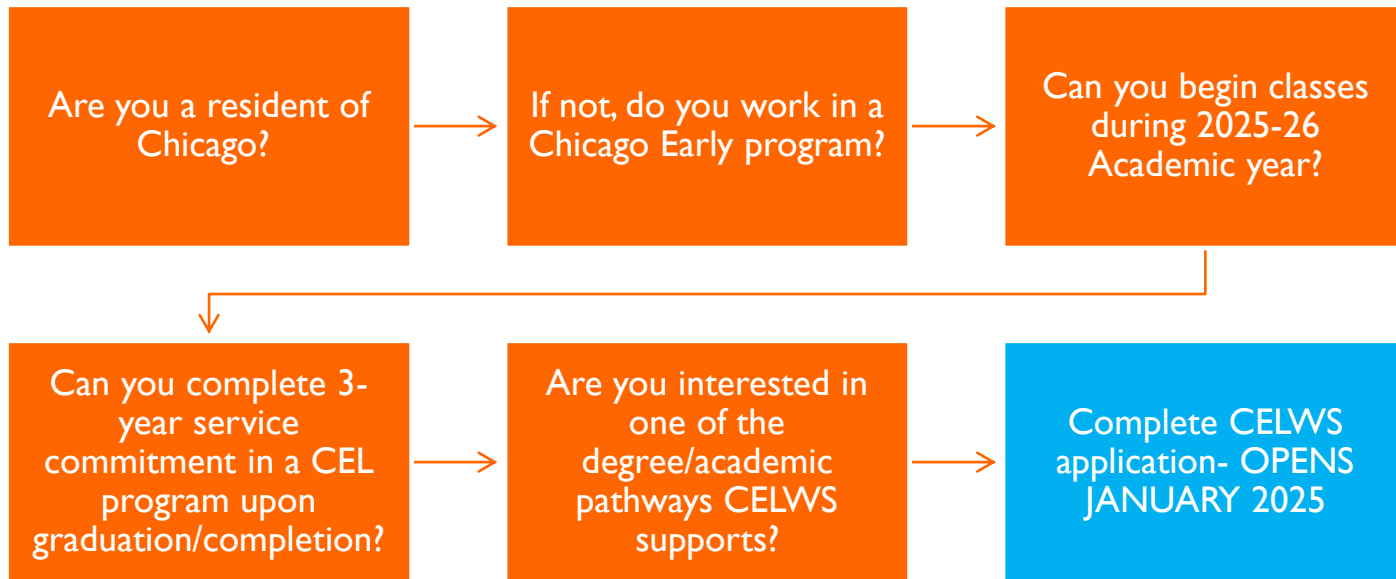


# NEXT STEPS

CELWS APPLICATION OPENING



# LET'S REVIEW



The Workforce Scholarship application is officially open! [Apply Now](#)

[RESOURCES](#) [CONNECT](#) [EVERY CHILD READY CHICAGO](#) [FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS](#)

 [SELECT LANGUAGE](#) ▼



[How To Apply](#) [Programs](#) [Locations](#) [Community-Based](#) [FA](#) [Scholarships](#) [About](#)



**Chicago Early Learning**



# Workforce Scholarship

## Advance Your Career in Early Childhood Education

Do you want to advance in your career as an early childhood educator, or become an early childhood professional? **Apply for the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship for the 2024–2025 academic year!**

**The Workforce Scholarship application is NOW OPEN.**

[APPLY NOW](#)

[SIGN UP FOR UPDATES](#)

### What will I need for the CELWS application?

- Gateways Registry ID- If you do not have one, you should apply for one at <https://registry.ilgateways.com>

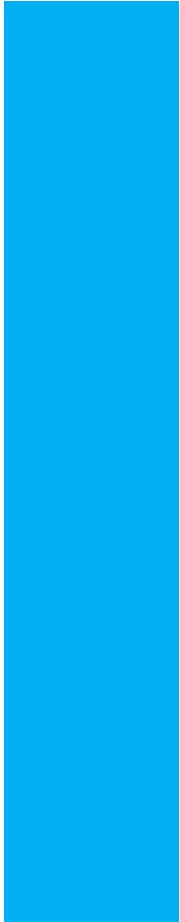
### What questions can I expect on CELWS application?

- Program/Degree seeking?
- Type/concentration of degree?

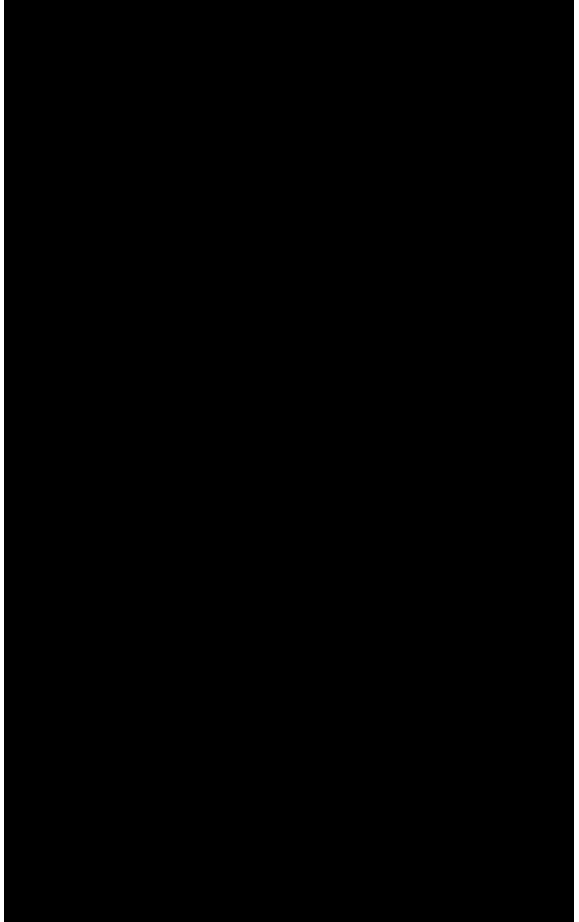
### What will I need once application is verified?

- A copy of your Professional Development Record (PDR) if available
- Official transcripts once you are verified and matched with a college/university





Q&A



THANK YOU!



Sandy De León, Executive Director  
Guadalupe Valdivia, Director



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# QUESTIONS/COMMENTS



Thank you for attending today!