



Fiscal Year 2022

Innovative Bridge and Transitions Program Grant
Application Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Application Due Date/Time: November 15, 2021 11:59 p.m.
Submit Application To: ICCB.IBT@illinois.gov

**UNIFORM NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
SUMMARY INFORMATION**

1.	Awarding Agency Name:	<i>Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)</i>
2.	Agency Contact:	<i>Lavon Nelson, Lavon.nelson@illinois.gov; (217)557-2742</i>
3.	Announcement Type:	<i>Initial announcement</i>
4.	Type of Assistance Instrument:	<i>Grant</i>
5.	Funding Opportunity Number:	<i>1670-2031</i>
6.	Funding Opportunity Title:	<i>FY2022 Innovative Bridge and Transitions</i>
7.	CSFA Number:	<i>684-01-1670</i>
8.	CSFA Popular Name:	<i>Innovative Bridge and Transitions</i>
9.	CFDA Number(s):	<i>N/A</i>
10.	Grant Period	<i>January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022</i>
11.	Anticipated Number of Awards:	<i>20-40</i>
12.	Estimated Total Program Funding:	<i>\$4,194,400</i>
13.	Award Range	<i>\$50,000 - \$300,000</i>
14.	Source of Funding:	<i>State</i>
15.	Cost Sharing/Matching Requirement:	<i>No</i>
16.	Indirect Costs Allowed	<i>Yes</i>
	Restrictions on Indirect Costs	
17.	Posted Date:	<i>October 4, 2021</i>
18.	Closing Date for Applications:	<i>November 15, 2021, 11:59 p.m.</i>
19.	Technical Assistance:	<i>Technical assistance will be provided throughout the grant period to grant recipients.</i>

A. Background and Purpose

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is inviting eligible applicants to apply for the Innovative Bridge and Transition Program Grant program. The ICCB will provide approximately \$4.1 in grant funding opportunities to be administered to support innovative bridge and transition programs and initiatives that support the seamless transition of students between education systems as well as employment. COVID-19 has disrupted education and employment opportunities for Illinoisans, disproportionately affecting racially minoritized communities and youth. Supporting and scaling effective and equitable education and career programming is essential for preparing targeted populations for post-pandemic recovery.

The purpose of this grant is to:

- Create or support programs that improve student transitions to and through postsecondary education (up to post baccalaureate) and into employment, programs that support these transitions for individuals with disabilities; and
- Scale programs that promote equity and diversity among those served.

B. Eligible Applicants

The ICCB is inviting eligible applicants listed below to submit proposals under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The eligible applicants are as follows:

- Institutions of higher education
- Community-based organizations
- Local education agencies
- Public or private nonprofit agencies
- Comprehensive rehabilitation facilities associated with a university or institutions of higher education
- Other applicants of demonstrated effectiveness in serving the eligible service population

Successful applicants must be the provider of the direct services; however, applicants may subcontract for supportive services that enhance program services or reduce barriers for eligible participants. Subcontracting is subject to ICCB approval.

C. Target Population

This grant is intended to provide services to targeted populations identified below. The intent of the grant is to serve individuals who are at least 16 years of age or older, and prepare:

- **adults who are not enrolled in high school** with limited academic or basic skills, underemployed or unemployed to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to employment in high skill, high wage, and in-demand occupations; and/or

- **youth who are in-school** to transition into postsecondary education or training programs following graduation. **Serving in-school youth is an allowable activity- only if the services to this population prepares them to enter into postsecondary education and training following graduation.**

D. Grant Objectives

The objectives of this grant are intended to increase access and persistence along career pathways for the targeted populations to be served. Grantees are to select one objective from the following four objectives for their grant focus:

- **Objective 1: Adult Education Bridge and Integrated Education and Training Programming:** Create new and greatly expand bridge or integrated education and training programming, which shall include contextualized basic reading, math, and language skills, occupational competencies, and employability skills. This objective shall not supplant required bridge and IET activities under WIOA Title II, Adult Education and Literacy FY2022 implementation.
- **Objective 2: Seamless Transitions for College and Career Pathways:** Implement programs that provide seamless transitions from high school to college or between postsecondary institutions, including but not limited to: curriculum alignment between secondary and postsecondary institutions, curriculum alignment and articulation efforts between postsecondary institutions (2+2 agreements, up to graduate level work), dual credit programming, CTE program of study development and implementation, college and career pathway endorsement activities, and pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship partnerships. Specifically, applicants should consider programs that provide seamless transitions for students, including out-of-school youth, into and through college and career pathways that prepare them for high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand careers.
- **Objective 3: Wrap-around Support Services:** Utilize transition/wrap-around services which provide students with the information and assistance they need to equitably access and persist along their career pathway. This may include providing wrap-around services for students transitioning from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs, or from credit or occupational programs to the workforce. Services may include academic advising, career pathway navigation, tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services (e.g., basic needs including housing, transportation, and child care).
- **Objective 4: Seamless Transitions for Students with Disabilities:** Create comprehensive programming for individuals with disabilities that provides vocational, psychological counseling, transitional and educational services, and job placement activities in order for them to live and work independently in the community. These programs may include transitions from high school to college as well as college to employment.

Priority Activities to be carried out in all Objectives:

- **Engage in partnerships** with other entities that may strengthen the ability of students to persist through the education and training provided. Systemic change efforts are encouraged. Partners may include community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, advocacy groups, local one-stops, and employers, among others.
- **Develop and implement career activities** which may strengthen career development and exploration, career planning, understanding the world of work, and integration of essential employability skills. This may include work-based learning opportunities (e.g. internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, etc.).
- **Implement and integrate equity-driven, evidenced-based practices, strategies, and pedagogy** throughout programming. Grantees should utilize data-informed decision-making in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programming to identify equity gaps and address inequities appropriately. Programs should aim to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion is adequately supported in programming. Specifically, programs should aim to advance equitable access and outcomes for racially and ethnically minoritized communities as well as others marginalized by education and workforce systems.

E. Allowable Activities with various Objectives:

The expectation is that applicants will propose activities that will align with statewide priorities around [career pathway](#) opportunities and activities that **promote equity and diversity**. Key definitions are included at the end of the NOFO. Applicants may develop or expand programming to align with priority sectors as identified in their local or regional WIOA plans including but not limited to work-based learning activities. These activities may include but are not limited to:

- Developing or Aligning Curriculum: Furthering the alignment of coursework by contextualizing and integrating basic skills or academic and career and technical education offerings. This may also include articulation agreements between community college and four-year institutions, curricular alignment activities up to post-baccalaureate level, and competency mapping throughout the pathway.
- Creating short-term training programs that support minority students' transition into postsecondary education and employment.
- Developing African American History programs that teach cultural awareness and historical perspectives.
- Developing an American History curriculum that teaches cultural awareness and gives an accurate account of history for k-12 in Illinois.
- Creation of programs and services that assists individuals with disabilities (i.e., those who are on the autism spectrum) to access educational services that will help support their independence and reduce barriers to their success.
- Creating a program of study, inclusive of dual credit, for an in-demand industry sector, from high school to postsecondary education.

- Developing an integrated education and training program that allows those who are basic skill deficient to earn industry recognized or college credentials, college credit, and credits toward an in-demand occupation.
- Expanding or developing models that link participants in adult education programs including all provider types and to community colleges.
- Developing models that promote service integration with partner programs.
- Developing a bridge program in an in-demand sector.
- Developing a process for using prior learning assessment to evaluate and grant credit for prior learning.
- Developing a student support center model that will enhance services to underrepresented populations.
- Creating support services models/toolkits that will reduce barriers to populations and enhance their educational success.
- Enhancing or developing institutional career pathways. Applicants may engage in career pathway development, alignment, and/or evaluation activities to ensure the inclusion of multiple entry and exit points, rigorous and integrated content, or focus on strengthening components which make up a successful bridge or transition program (i.e., integrated education and training program development, curriculum alignment, stackable credentials).
 - Working with employers to develop a career pathway program that is designed for incumbent workers.
 - Creating career pathway activities for those youth in their senior year of high school that smooth their transition into postsecondary education or to a training program.
- Developing work-based learning or apprenticeship models.
- Developing support services models that include wrap-around services for basic needs including but not limited to housing, financial literacy, and other services that will reduce barriers to educational success for all students including those who are homeless and those individuals with disabilities.
- Developing comprehensive programs and services for those with disabilities that provide assessment of work strengths, abilities and limitations through an evaluation process which may include but not limited to interviews, testing and observation. These services may consist of providing living center programming such as life skills including budgeting, meal preparation, job placement into compatible competitive employment, professional training and research, driver's rehabilitation services, essential work skills with an emphasis on employer expectations, and other daily living skills that offer residents an opportunity to live and learn new skills and work toward personal independence.
- Other activities of statewide significance that expands career pathways and is aligned with labor market information as identified by local or regional needs.

GRANT DELIVERABLES

1. Carry out deliverables of the proposed scope of work.

2. Submit required programmatic and fiscal reports on a quarterly basis per the schedule below to ICCB.IBT@illinois.gov:

FY2022 Reporting Schedule for the IBT Grant		
Quarter	Period	Date Due
1	January 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022	April 30, 2022
2	April 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022	July 30, 2022
3	July 1 – September 30, 2022	October 30, 2022
4	October 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022	January 30, 2023

(Reporting templates and other instructions will be made available to grant recipients at a later date.)

3. Participate in all required Operational Meetings and Learning Community meetings. No more than three virtual meetings will be held during grant implementation.
4. Participation in professional development and technical assistance events is encouraged, but not required.

F. Application Package

Applications submitted under this grant program will undergo a merit-based review process. All parts of the application package must be completed by the deadline in order to be considered. Applicants should ensure that all elements are clearly addressed and are strongly encouraged to use headers to address all elements or some consistent form of response delineation. Applicants will receive a receipt of application. However, applicants will not be notified if there are items that are missing from their application. Applicants must use the templates provided on the ICCB website: <http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/grant-opportunities/>

The application must be organized as listed below.

1. Uniform Application
Applicants must complete each section of the Uniform Application in its entirety. If a question is not applicable, please enter NA. *A template is provided.*
2. Cover Page and Grant Summation Template
The applicant must complete the Cover Page and Grant Summation Template (*template provided*) which encompasses applicant information and a synopsis of the grant, including but not limited to:
 - Organization background
 - Summary of the project activities and how they align with the goals of the Innovative Bridge and Transition grant.
 - Target population(s) and geographic communities to be served (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, educational/workforce levels)
 - Projected number of unduplicated individuals to be served

- Measurable Goals and Objectives.
3. Application Narrative
The eligible applicant must submit a narrative of no more than twelve pages (charts and graphs are a part of the page limitation), double-spaced, 12 point font that must include the following information in the order listed below and utilizing a header for each Numbered Section.

Narrative Sections

1. **Statement of Need:** a description of the target population of students to be served (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, educational levels—high school equivalency/GED, workforce status, etc.). For career pathway or employment-based programs, the organization should identify the targeted industry sector, if applicable. Organizations should utilize and present data as evidence of need.
2. **Project Goals:** identify a) projected *unduplicated* number of individuals to be served, b) other indicators of performance for the intended targeted population, and c) programmatic/system goals or deliverables. (Note that goals and objectives must be measurable.) Displaying this information in clearly delineated format such as a chart is encouraged.
3. **Project Work Plan:** Clearly describe the project activities and associated timeline for each activity to be carried out during the grant period. The activities should clearly relate to the goals of the grant. A chart or table is encouraged.
4. **Partnerships:** Description of any partnerships and the role of each partner play in the grant project.
5. **Impact:** Description of the impact of the project on students, the community, the institution, employers, etc.
6. **Scalability and Replicability:** Description of how the project could be scaled or replicated by others in the State. *All resources and products developed with grant funds will be provided from the grantee to the ICCB to share with the field.*
7. **Applicant Capacity and Effectiveness:** Description of the applicant's capacity to execute the project including a description of previous experience in implementing successful Bridge or Transition Programs and related activities such as wrap-around services for the target population. *Applicants should demonstrate past project performance as evidence of successful implementation and capacity. The ICCB will consider success of past project implementation and ability to carry out deliverables, including reporting requirements as indicators of capacity and effectiveness.*
8. **Sustainability:** Description of the applicant's plan to sustain the project. This may include identifying resources, timelines, and goals following the close of the grant.

The Application Narrative submitted under this NOFO should be organized, clear and understandable.

4. Uniform Budget

All applicants must submit a proposed budget on the State of Illinois Uniform Grant Budget Template (*template provided*). Applicants should submit budgets based upon the total estimated costs for the project. Costs should be in line with allowable costs under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act. For information on allowable uses of funds and other administrative requirements:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Pages/ResourceLibrary.aspx>.

G. Application/Submission Information

Each grant application package must be submitted no later than November 15, 2021, to ICCB.IBT@illinois.gov. Grant application and materials may be found on the ICCB website at <http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/grant-opportunities/>.

A set of bidder's conferences will be held at the following dates and times. Applicants may choose to attend one of the following Bidder's conferences. Bidder's conference attendance is not mandatory, but we request that participants register for the one session they will attend. See sessions below.

- October 15, 2021
Virtual Webinar
<https://illinois2.webex.com/illinois2/j.php?MTID=md1dcb95548856a18491c1e4f4558ba43>
10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CST
- October 18, 2021
Virtual Webinar
<https://illinois2.webex.com/illinois2/j.php?MTID=m0dedb89b896c3840b1e27ec7ba3db512>
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. CST

All questions must be submitted electronically to ICCB.IBT@illinois.gov. Phone calls will not be accepted. Include in the subject line: [**Organization's Name**] Innovative Bridge and Transition Program. All questions will be posted in an FAQ on the ICCB website.

Paper copies of the applications are not permitted. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt of the e-mail containing the attachments. It is up to the applicant to ensure that all items in the package are attached and sent in the e-mail.

All applicants, funded or not funded, will be notified by December 17, 2021.

G. Grant Pre-Qualification

Interested institutions may apply for a grant but will not be eligible for a grant award until the institution has pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal located at www.grants.illinois.gov.

During pre-qualification, Dun and Bradstreet verifications are performed including a check of Debarred and Suspended status and good standing with the Secretary of State. The prequalification process also includes a financial and administrative risk assessment utilizing an Internal Controls Questionnaire.

If applicable, the entity will be notified that it is ineligible for award as a result of the Dun and Bradstreet verification. The entity will be informed of corrective action needed to become eligible for a grant award.

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110 (d)) is required to:

- Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. If you are not registered in SAM, this link provides a connection for SAM registration:
<https://governmentcontractregistration.com/sam-registration.asp>.
- Provide a valid DUNS number in its application.
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award.

ICCB will not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has fully complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements.

Grant recipients must comply with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and equal employment.

H. Funding Information

Grant Period:

The grant period is January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022.

Funding Availability:

A total of \$4,194,400 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the ICCB for grants to eligible entities for the educational purposes as outlined under this NOFO. Only one grant application per organization. In addition, of the amount appropriated a total of \$800,000 will be set aside for small grants of less than \$100,000.00.

Recipients are not eligible to renew or extend existing grant-funded projects but may supplement or scale current initiatives.

Funding Deadlines

- Grant funds must be obligated by December 31, 2022
- Good/products must be ordered by December 31, 2022/received by February 28, 2023
- Services must be rendered by December 31, 2022
- Grant funds must be expended by February 28, 2023

Cost Sharing or Matching

- No cost sharing or matching is required.

Indirect Cost Rate

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRA's.

- Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. ICCB will accept the federally negotiated rate.
- State Negotiated Rate. The organization must negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have a Federally Negotiated Rate or elect to use the De Minimis Rate. The indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted to the State of Illinois within 90 days of the notice of award.
- De Minimis Rate. An organization that has never received a Federally Negotiated Rate may elect a De Minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the De Minimis rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDCS annually in order to accept the De Minimis rate.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Grant recipients must adhere to the Grant Accountability Transparency Act (GATA) unless otherwise permitted.

I. Review Criteria and Selection Process

The ICCB staff will use the criteria listed in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to review the applications and will award points accordingly. Decisions to award grants and the funding levels will be determined per application based upon compliance with the requirements of this NOFO and the grant proposal. Only applications will be scored and ranked using a merit-based review points-based rubric. Applications scoring 60 points or higher (out of 100 points) will be considered for funding, contingent upon availability of funds.

Applicants must demonstrate that they meet all requirements under this NOFO as described throughout.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the Application Narrative submitted under this NOFO.

- **Project Need (20%)**
 - The applicant identifies both programmatic and financial need for the grant.
 - The applicant includes a statement of need that includes a description of the target population of students to be served including disaggregated demographic data, as appropriate (e.g., ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, educational levels – high school equivalency/GED, workforce status, etc.).
 - Targeted industry sector is identified, if appropriate.
 - The applicant identifies the projected unduplicated number of students to be served.

- **Project Development and Activities (30%)**
 - The applicant activities, as outlined in the proposal, are thoroughly described and supported by evidence and/or data, including specific tasks and timelines and how they relate to the identified objectives.
 - The applicant describes the collaboration with key partners, both internal and external, and clearly details each partner's role.
 - The applicant clearly indicates the objective of focus and the activities align with the objective area.
 - The applicant has addressed each of the three priority activities for their chosen objective.

- **Project Impact (30%)**
 - The applicant has described the project outcomes and they are well-defined, measurable, reasonable, and relate to the identified activities, goals and objectives.
 - The goals and projected impact of the grant align with the overarching purpose of this NOFO.
 - The applicant includes the projected unduplicated numbers to be served
 - The applicant describes the potential impact on students and their achievements, the community, the institution, employers, etc.

- **Project Capacity and Sustainability (15%)**
 - The applicant describes their capacity to execute the project including a description of previous experience in implementing successful related projects or activities.
 - The applicant describes a clear vision for scalability and replicability in the future, where appropriate.
 - The applicant has a sustainability plan that is detailed and feasible.

- **Completion and Submission of All Required Documents (5%)**

The applicant submits an application that is accurate, complete, and cost-effective.

 - Uniform Application

- Cover Page
- Application Narrative
- Uniform Budget

J. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Lavon Nelson
Senior Director for Workforce Education
Illinois Community College Board
401 E. Capitol Avenue
Springfield, IL 62701
Fax: 217-558-6700
Email: lavon.nelson@illinois.gov

Definition of Key Elements of the Grant

Bridge Programming - Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or basic skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand middle-and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. Bridge Programs are considered Pre-IET programs.

Required elements include:

- Contextualized instruction that integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge
- Career development that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work
- Transition services that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs. Services may include academic advising, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services like transportation and childcare.

Career Pathways - A career pathway, means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns both vertically and horizontally across Secondary Education, Adult Education, Workforce Training and Development, Career and Technical Education, and Postsecondary Education systems, pathways, and programs. The ICCB has approved 16 Career Pathways that lead to meaningful employment and family sustaining wages for students in Adult Education. Students enrolled in Career Pathway programming, develop marketable skills training while receiving contextualized instruction that prepares students for passing High School Equivalency (HSE) exams. Providers administering these programs must ensure that there is an alignment with regional and local labor market information as described in regional and local workforce plans.

ICAPS (Models 1 & 2) - The **ICAPS** model is considered the official Integrated Education and Training (IET) model for Illinois. It capitalizes on integrated partnerships between Adult Education providers and Career and Technical Education (CTE) divisions at Illinois community colleges as well as other train to provide concurrent enrollment and instruction in a team taught environment with comprehensive student supports resulting in skill level gains, high school equivalency certifications, transferrable college credit, and short-term stackable college and industry-recognized credentials. See more information here: <https://www.icapsillinois.com/>

Integrated Education and Training (IET) - Title II of WIOA defines Integrated Education and Training (IET) as a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. Integrated Education and Training programs prepare a student for academic success and meaningful employment along a Career Pathway have been demonstrated to effectively prepare students for successful transitions into post-secondary education and career employment. Illinois' Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming has two models: Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) Model 1 (Credit) and ICAPS Model 2 (Non-credit).

Transition Programming/Wrap-Around Services – Services in conjunction with that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of transition to and through postsecondary education and training. Services may include academic advising, navigators, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services like transportation and childcare.