1. Q: Is the source of PATH funding federal or state?

A: State. Funds for the PATH program were made available through the State of Illinois FY2023 budget. Funding in subsequent years is subject to annual appropriation by the General Assembly.

2. Q: What is the specific source of the data used to create completion targets?

A: The data derive from ICCB's Centralized Data System. Specifically, the data are captured from annually submitted student-level information by each community college in the ICCB Annual Completions (A2) submission (for Academic Year 2020). Completions from these data are only reflective of credit-bearing programs. Please keep in mind that districts may meet their completion target with non-credit program completions in eligible PATH programs. Eligible non-credit programs must culminate in an industry-recognized credential (e.g. certificate, certification-aligning with licensure as appropriate) and be approved by the ICCB per the Program Offerings Chart.

3. Q: Is there a specific way institutions should allocate funds across weighted or non-weighted programs?

A: No, institutions have the latitude to allocate and expend funds in a way that makes the most sense for their district based on need or priority. Institutions should be creative in expending dollars in order to create capacity for the anticipated growth in students. Additionally, this program is modeled after the Workforce Equity Initiative, so it is expected that students will be provided with comprehensive wraparound support services.

4. Q: Can PATH funding support non-credit programs?

A: Yes, PATH funding can support non-credit programs. Eligible PATH programs are listed within the Program Design. These programs may be credit or non-credit. Institutions must identify each program, both credit and non-credit, in the Program Offerings Chart. *ICCB staff will review this list to ensure it aligns with the eligible CIPs and provide approval for each individual program.*

5. Q: Who can be counted as a completer for the purposes of this grant?

A: Students are considered completers for the purposes of this grant if they complete an eligible PATH program in the academic year for which the grant is active. Completion means a student has completed a program that culminates in an industry-recognized credential (e.g. certificate, certification, degree, aligning with licensure as appropriate).
The count may be duplicated meaning, for example, that if a student completes a 16-week program in the fall semester and then transitions into another eligible program in the spring semester and completes, the student would be counted for two completions.
The count will include students completing both credit and non-credit programs, that are on the eligible program list. All programs must be identified in the Program Offerings Chart for approval by the ICCB.
Completers may include students who began a program prior to the academic year for which the grant is being implemented. The grant program supports districts to implement activities that

improve student retention.

6. Q: How should the PATH program interact with my institution's current Workforce Equity Initiative program?

A: The PATH program is modeled after the WEI program, broadening the target student populations eligible to participate (e.g. first-generation students, students of color, low-income students) while focusing solely on the healthcare career field. The PATH program can have strong collaboration with an institution's WEI program and should not be seen as competition with an institution's WEI program.

7. Q: What other student-related costs are allowable under this grant?

A:
- transportation assistance (gas cards, bus passes, mileage reimbursement)
- childcare (on or off campus)
- housing
- food
- required pre-admission costs, such as titer tests, drug testing, CPR certification, fingerprinting and criminal background check
- tuition and fee balance forgiveness

8. Q: What students can be supported by PATH funding?

A: All students who are enrolled in any eligible PATH program can be supported by PATH funding. This includes students who entered the program prior to AY2023 as well as dual credit students. The level to which a student can be financially supported should be dependent on their need for financial resources (see Question #14 for additional clarification). However, the institution may consider broadening its ability to reduce costs to all students through textbook and supply loan libraries.

9. Q: Can PATH funds support continuing education units?

A: No.

10. Q: Can PATH funds pay for construction/renovation costs?

A: Yes, construction and capital improvements are allowable under this grant as long as it is directly related to the purpose of this grant and is integral to capacity-building or expansion efforts in order to accommodate more students in PATH eligible programs. Districts must seek prior approval from the ICCB on all capital improvements utilizing PATH funding.

11. Q: Can grant funds be used for advertising to support student outreach?

A: Yes.

12. Q: What is the definition for low-income status?

A: Students may be able to demonstrate financial need through a variety of ways. Federal Pell eligibility is one way an institution may determine financial need of a student. Pell eligibility cannot be the only means of determination considering students would have had to complete the

FAFSA. Other ways of determining financial need may be through documentation of public benefits (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid), tax returns, etc.

13. Q: Does my institution have to take the full percentage available through our Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate for indirect costs?

A: If a Grantee receiving a State of Illinois award voluntarily chooses to waive indirect costs or charges less than their negotiated indirect cost rate, State awarding agencies and pass-through entities can allow this. The decision must be made solely by the Grantee or subrecipient that is eligible for indirect cost reimbursement.

14. Q: Are we expected to have 15% growth in each eligible PATH program?

A: No. The completion target was set with the intention that the district would have an overall and cumulative 15% growth in completions in PATH-eligible programs. This means that each district may focus on building capacity for a select few PATH eligible programs instead of all, based on program need. The ICCB has identified 7 programs as priority, based on labor market need statewide. While we encourage concerted efforts to grow these programs, not every district has these programs nor the same level of labor market demand.

15. Q: What are the parameters for collaboration between our Workforce Equity Initiative grant and our PATH grant?

A: While WEI and PATH have their separate requirements and priorities, there are many opportunities for collaboration between the two programs. WEI requires at least 60% of students served in its variety of workforce programs to be African American as well as to **create, support, or expand** short-term (one year or less) workforce (credit and/or noncredit) training opportunities in industries and high-need communities, while PATH widens the target populations served but focuses specifically on programs that lead to employment in the healthcare field. PATH was modeled after WEI for the purposes of providing strong wraparound support services to students throughout the educational journey as an evidenced-based strategy for improving education and employment outcomes. Collaboration may happen through a variety of means:

- **Planning:** Upon the awarding of these grants, it would be a valuable exercise for various grant programs to collaborate when writing grant implementation plans and planning budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. Each grant program should identify resources needed to carry out required activities to meet the goals and priorities of the specific grant program. While WEI is focused primarily on serving students in a variety of pathways and industries as determined by local and regional labor market information, PATH seeks to create programmatic capacity, therefore resource allocation across the two grants may look different. Braiding of grant dollars is allowable but must be done carefully to ensure goals across both grants are met.
- **Staffing:** While it is allowable for certain staff to be paid in-part by both grants and therefore shared across the grant programs, it is not encouraged that this be done for key positions. For example, student success coaches or navigators are critical to student success and therefore should focus solely on one grant program or another. If success coaches are sector-focused, then it may be feasible for both grants to support staff in healthcare programs. However, the focus should be to make sure that staff are available to support the students of each grant to ensure successful education and employment outcomes.

16. Q: Can funds be braided to support the same programs?

A: Yes. With PATH exclusively funding healthcare programs, it may be sensible for WEI programs to prioritize supporting non-healthcare programs in terms of equipment and supply purchases. This does not limit use of said healthcare programs by WEI students.
Other grant programs, such as Perkins, may also be ideal for collaboration.

17. Q: Can funds be braided to support the same student?

A: For most institutions, there will be enough grant dollars for each grant to support students in full entering eligible education and training programs. For both WEI and PATH, in order for a student to be supported in terms of overcoming academic or non-academic barriers or receiving a stipend, the education and training program must be an eligible program approved by the ICCB. With WEI focusing on short-term credentials, it would be sensible for the college to support the healthcare students who meet the criteria of a target population under WEI with WEI funds for the credentials earned and then if the student transitions into the next credential, the student could be supported in part or full by PATH dollars.

18. Q: How are students counted for programmatic outcomes in support by both WEI and PATH funds?

A: Students supported by both grant programs can be counted in the success metrics of both grants if credentials are earned.
Student supported by PATH, but not with WEI dollars, will not be counted toward the success metric in the WEI program.
Students supported by WEI, but not PATH, who are enrolled in PATH-eligible programs should be counted toward overall completions for the PATH project.

19. Q: Can PATH funding support faculty salaries and fringe benefits while also being used for student tuition assistance within the same program or course?

A: Yes, faculty personnel costs such as salary and fringe benefits are an allowable use of funds under the PATH Grant where the costs are for capacity-building, additional course offerings, extra duty pay for increased workload and new programs. The costs for direct instruction of a new program are also allowable of which these costs may be supported up to five years.
Grantees may also utilize PATH funding to support student tuition and fee assistance for PATH-eligible programs. Thus, there may be classes where PATH funds are supplementing both the course instruction and student tuition.