

**APPROVED**

**AUGUST 10, 2021**

Item #C-10  
August 10, 2021

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CREDENTIAL COMPLETION COHORT (EC4) GRANT**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** The Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Grant funded through federal Preschool Development Birth Through Five monies is part of the State's efforts to strengthen early care and education systems and improve school readiness among children from families with low incomes. In partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois Board of Higher Education will enter into intergovernmental agreements with institutions of higher education to provide cohort-based opportunities for members of the incumbent early childhood care and education workforce to advance their professional learning and complete related postsecondary credentials.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education authorize the Executive Director to distribute funds to institutions of higher education for the Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Grant and further to execute and deliver any documentation, including the amendment of existing agreements, necessary to effect distribution of such funds in the amounts as specified in Attachment A.



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CREDENTIAL COMPLETION COHORT (EC4) GRANT**

The Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Grant is one component of the State of Illinois Preschool Development Birth Through Five initiative to strengthen early care and education systems and improve school readiness among children from families with low incomes. The EC4 grant project is designed to address the state's shortage of qualified early care and education professionals and the related equity issues regarding the needs of families to access high-quality early learning and care settings with qualified individuals serving as teachers.

The EC4 project provides grant funds to institutions of higher education (IHEs) to support cohorts of working early childhood education professionals to achieve shorter-term Gateways credentials and degrees, moving them forward on early childhood career pathways. The project includes financial assistance for scholarships and credential fee waivers, tailored supports to working professionals, and course delivery that meets the needs of working adults. Particular emphasis is paid to ensuring access for persons of color, individuals in rural settings, and individuals working or aspiring to work in high-need areas such as Infant/Toddler, Bilingual/ESL, Early Childhood Special Education, and settings requiring the Illinois State Board of Education Professional Educator License.

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allocated \$1.43 million in Fiscal Year 2021 and \$2.275 million in Fiscal Year 2022 to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to implement the program. The IBHE awarded EC4 grant funds to five institutions of higher education in Fiscal Year 2021 and intends to amend existing agreements with these same five institutions of higher education in Fiscal Year 2022 to continue cohort programs through December 2022. Reports on the EC4 Grant initiative and related outcomes will be provided to the Board.

**Recommendation**

The staff recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby authorizes the Executive Director to allocate FY22 funds from the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five Initiative as to implement the Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Grant. The Board authorizes the Executive Director to:*

- 1) *Amend agreements with institutional grant recipients for Fiscal Year 2022 as enumerated in Attachment A.*
- 2) *Use funds, in accordance with provisions of an intergovernmental agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education dated March 22, 2021 to staff the initiative.*

ATTACHMENT A: Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4)  
Grant Allocations

	FY21	FY22
Joliet Junior College	\$157,488	\$360,000
Lewis University	\$360,480	\$639,520
National Louis University	\$354,292	\$522,400
Quincy University	\$202,224	\$398,080
Western Illinois University	\$225,516	\$225,582
IBHE oversight	\$130,000	\$129,418
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,430,000</b>	<b>\$2,275,000</b>