Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Grant

Submitted for:	Information.
Summary:	This item provides an update about the Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Grant funded through federal Preschool Development Birth Through Five monies as part of the State's efforts to strengthen early care and education systems and improve school readiness among children from families with low incomes.
Action Requested:	None.

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 a focus on providing 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.

In August 2021, the IBHE approved the Fiscal Year 2022 amendments totaling $2.275 million. In September 2021, the IBHE approved the allocation of an additional $850,955 in funds for this project, pending action by the ISBE. These additional funds will be added as amendments to the current Fiscal Year 2022 agreements so that grantees can support additional candidates and provide additional services. Subsequent to the September 2021 IBHE meeting, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development provided a revised figure of $850,000 for this additional allocation. Attachment A includes revisions to planned allocations based on this new figure. Reports on the EC4 Grant initiative and related outcomes will be provided to the Board.

	FY22 – August Allocation	FY22 – September (Additional Funds)	FY22 – December Revision to September (Additional Funds)	Total
Joliet Junior College	$360,000	$149,400	$150,000	$510,000
Lewis University	$639,520	$78,000	$78,000	$717,520
National Louis University	$522,400	$402,950	$330,100	$852,500
Quincy University	$398,080	$202,400	$202,400	$600,480
Western Illinois University	$225,582	$18,205	$18,200	$243,782
IBHE oversight	$129,418	$0	$71,300	$200,718
Total	$2,275,000	$850,955	$850,000	$3,125,000