

ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2023, TO JUNE 30, 2024



January 2025

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AGENCY

Illinois Board of Higher Education

1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza

Suite 333

Springfield, Illinois 62701-1377

217.782.2551

TTY 888.261.2881

FAX 217.782.8548

www.ibhe.org




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ABOUT THE ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

IBHE is responsible for planning and coordinating the state's system of higher education in five major areas: strategic planning; program approval and operating authority; higher education budget; data analysis and research; and grants administration.

A THRIVING ILLINOIS

IBHE launched, in partnership with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), the higher education strategic plan, [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#). The plan outlines 25 strategies designed to achieve a thriving Illinois, one which has an inclusive economy with broad prosperity and equitable paths to opportunity for all, especially those facing the greatest barriers:


-  **EQUITY:** Close equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind.
-  **SUSTAINABILITY:** Build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions.
-  **GROWTH:** Increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth.

The Plan was approved by the IBHE in June 2021 and endorsed by the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission in Fall 2021. A number of *A Thriving Illinois* strategies have launched and are described below.



EQUITY PLANS & PRACTICES


IBHE received equity plans submitted by the state's public institutions. Illinois' public institutions of higher education are required by law to develop and implement equity plan and practices that include methods and strategies to increase the access, retention, completion, and student loan repayment rates of minorities, rural students, adult students, women, and individuals with disabilities who are traditionally underrepresented in education programs and activities. The plans will be reviewed by higher education stakeholders and experts in addition to state agency and the governor's office leaders.

-  **EQUITY** *Equity Strategy 2: Establish and implement institution-level equity plans, practices to close access progression, completion, and attainment gaps.*

ILLINOIS TUTORING INITIATIVE

IBHE and ISBE continued their learning recovery effort for students most impacted by the pandemic, the Illinois Tutoring Initiative. We partnered with four public universities and two community colleges to address learning recovery at high-need school districts by offering high-impact tutoring for students. Tutors are teacher education students, other college students, and community partners. In the 2023-2024 academic year, 1,462 trained tutors provided high-impact tutoring sessions in reading and/or math to 4,853 students in grades 3-8 in nearly 60 school districts statewide. The impact of this initiative was highlighted in a [brief](#) released by The White House. Illinois State University provided overall coordination for the initiative. The other six participating institutions in the initiative were: Governors State University, Illinois Central College, Northern Illinois University, Southeastern Illinois College, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. The program is set to sunset in September 2024.



-  **EQUITY** *Equity Strategy 1: Support the ongoing learning renewal of students and systemic implementation of evidence-informed student support practices.*

END STUDENT HOUSING INSECURITY (ESHI) GRANT

IBHE established the End Student Housing Insecurity (ESHI) grant to support institutions in addressing the systemic causes of homelessness and basic-needs insecurity among students. In FY 2024, nearly \$1.8 million was awarded to 10 public and private non-profit institutions of higher education. The grant funds were used to support and supplement the work that was already taking place at the institutions to address the basic needs of youth in care, at-risk, or currently experiencing homelessness.



EQUITY

Equity Strategy 1: Support the ongoing learning renewal of students and systemic implementation of evidence-informed student support practices.

BENEFITS NAVIGATORS

IBHE brought together designated Benefits Navigators from public institutions of higher education as a Community of Practice to learn from each other and to share best practices several times throughout the fiscal year. Each public institution of higher education in Illinois is required to designate a member of staff to serve as a Benefits Navigator to help students to determine their eligibility for public benefits to address needs such as food insecurity, transportation, etc. Benefits Navigators also identify campuswide and community resource support.



EQUITY

Equity Strategy 1: Support the ongoing learning renewal of students and systemic implementation of evidence-informed student support practices.

HOUSE LIAISONS

IBHE convened HOUSE Liaisons from each public institution in Illinois to provide training on how to best support homeless students and co-hosted with ICCB an expanded annual training and a state-wide conference. Each public institution of higher education in Illinois is required to designate a member of staff to serve as a HOUSE Liaison. The role of HOUSE Liaison aims to address the needs of homeless students on college and university campuses by serving as an advocate and resource for homeless students and improving the accessibility and affordability of on-campus housing.



EQUITY

Equity Strategy 1: Support the ongoing learning renewal of students and systemic implementation of evidence-informed student support practices.

TASK FORCE ON CAMPUS SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CLIMATE SURVEYS

IBHE received institutions' reported findings from the first round of conducted [Campus Sexual Misconduct Climate Surveys](#). The task force was charged with developing a base campus sexual misconduct climate survey for institutions to administer and with developing implementation guidance – like timing, content, and application of the survey. The task force completed this work in July 2023. All institutions of higher education are mandated by law to annually conduct an anonymous campus sexual misconduct climate survey to assess students' experiences, outcomes regarding their experiences, and perceptions of sexual violence and collegiate culture. The task force is also charged with refining the survey over time and will reconvene in 2025 to review the findings of the survey.



EQUITY

Equity Strategy 1: Support the ongoing learning renewal of students and systemic implementation of evidence-informed student support practices.

COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FUNDING

IBHE continued to convene the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding to develop an equity-based public university funding formula.

The [Commission](#) was co-chaired by the IBHE Board Chair, the Deputy Governor for Education, the Senate Majority Leader, and Representative Carol Ammons. It launched in November 2021 and its recommendations were delivered in a [report](#) to the Illinois General Assembly in March 2024.

ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON
EQUITABLE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FUNDING



SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability Strategy 1: Invest in public higher education through an equitable, stable, and sufficient funding system.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET

For the fourth consecutive year, the IBHE made budget recommendations that reflected an equitable distribution of funds and invested dollars in the strategies outlined in *A Thriving Illinois*. The governor's budget supported many of these recommendations and ultimately, Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 was another historic higher education budget of \$2.6 billion – a \$76 million increase from the prior year. Among the highlights in the FY 2024 state budget were a \$10 million increase in the state's need-based student grant program, Monetary Award Program (MAP), a \$24.6 million (2%) increase in funding for public universities, and a \$5.9 million (2%) increase in funding for community colleges. Additionally, the budget included an appropriation of \$575 million for the construction, repair and renovation of infrastructure on campuses across the state to offer equitable and high-quality learning experiences to every Illinois student.



SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability Strategy: Build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE CENTER

IBHE and IDHS continued their collaborative efforts to advance the Behavioral Health Workforce Center.

Building on the foundational work established in the center's inaugural year, this initiative remains focused on addressing the critical statewide shortage of behavioral health workers. Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and the University of Illinois-Chicago continue to serve as central hubs for this statewide effort, spearheading strategies to recruit, train, educate, retain, diversify, and advance the behavioral health workforce. In FY24, the center leveraged its operational groundwork to expand its reach and deepen its impact, as a team of behavioral health and workforce experts worked collaboratively across Illinois to meet the pressing needs of the behavioral health sector. This ongoing effort represents a key component in strengthening Illinois' capacity to deliver high-quality behavioral health services.



GROWTH

Growth Strategy 3: Align the state's economic development and higher education strategies, ensuring both address historic inequities.

COMMON APP

IBHE expanded its partnership with the Common App to implement a statewide direct admissions program.

The IBHE was awarded a grant by the Lumina Foundation to implement, in collaboration with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), a direct admissions program for community college students transferring to public universities and recent high school graduates by expanding and connecting two existing efforts: the Public University Uniform Admission Pilot Program and the state's participation with the Common App.



GROWTH

Growth Strategy 4: Encourage high school graduates to enroll in our higher education system and keep talent in Illinois.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

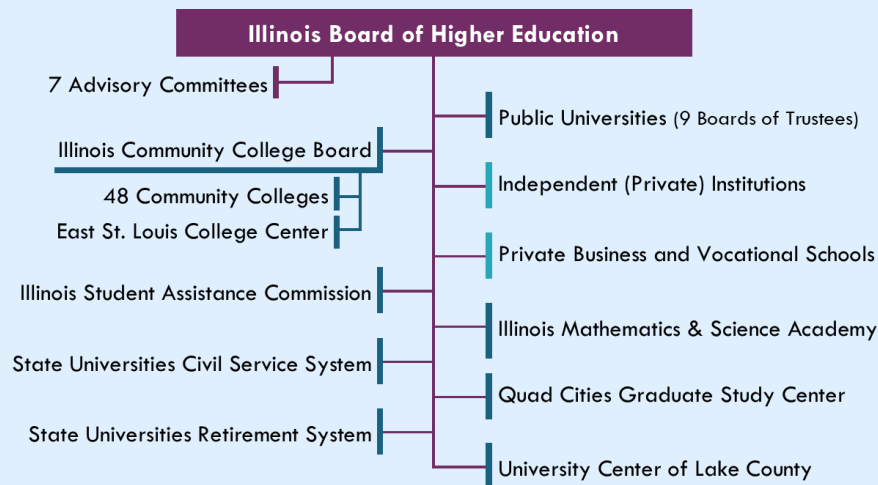
IBHE co-leads the ECACE Initiative, a Consortium of higher education institutions collectively supporting the upskilling of the early childhood workforce. Over the last three years, the Consortium was supported by \$200M in federal funds through the Illinois Department of Human Services. These funds were used to provide the ECACE scholarship and to support grants to institutions to support students and redesign their programs. In AY2024, the ECACE Scholarship, administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), awarded approximately \$76.4 m to 4,694 students; awards were made to students in all 62 institutions and to students representing all legislative districts in Illinois. Institutions engaged in a myriad of activities to support students in the short- and long-run. Many institutions developed and redesigned programs to meet students' needs and to honor with credit for prior learning achieved through work or school based experiences. Institutions continued to support students through over 50,000 meetings between mentors and students. Institutions also engaged in broad outreach to communities and employers, both to recruit students and to ensure that higher education programs are responsive to needs of employers and working adults. Across the state, community-based higher education navigators support workforce members to develop professional development plans and enrolled in higher education through high-touch outreach and support.



Growth Strategy 5: Establish a consortium of community colleges and universities to better serve the incumbent early childhood workforce.

STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

IBHE makes budget recommendations and grants operating authority and program approval for public higher education agencies and organizations and private institutions.



Legend: purple is IBHE, blue denotes a public entity with a separate governing board, and aqua indicates private institutions under IBHE authority.