

2026 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Pursue Community College Workforce Degrees

As Illinois faces significant workforce shortages, particularly in technical high-wage/high-demand fields, community colleges are ready to meet these demands through baccalaureate degree offerings. Community colleges already engage with thousands of employers and play a critical role in developing talent to fill gaps in industries. Legislation should require an evidence-based approval process through ICCB and IBHE demonstrating workforce demand, employer support, and regional alignment; ensure community college baccalaureate programs meet all state and accreditor (HLC) standards; cap tuition and fees at no more than 150% of current community college rates; and require a cost analysis confirming sufficient institutional resources.

Enhance Student Transfer and Articulation Policies

Illinois must improve the transfer process between community colleges and four-year institutions to ensure students can efficiently pursue their degrees without delays or added costs. This includes strengthening articulation agreements and creating clear, guaranteed transfer pathways. ICCTA supports legislation that fosters seamless credit transfer, enhances student advising, and expands transfer opportunities. These improvements will help increase degree completion rates, reduce financial burdens, and strengthen Illinois' workforce.

Prepare Illinois' Future Workers

Following last year's action to guide the responsible use of artificial intelligence in higher education, Illinois community colleges are focused on equipping students with workforce skills needed in a rapidly changing economy. ICCTA supports continued investment in career and technical education (CTE), work-based learning, and innovative career pathways to grow Illinois' common workforce ecosystem. By aligning education with workforce demand and advancing opportunities in emerging industries, community colleges will ensure Illinois remains a leader in preparing students for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

CORE LEGISLATIVE VALUES

Remain Responsive to the Community College District

Illinois community college boards are locally elected to make decisions affecting their local districts and are directly responsive to the electorate. ICCTA is committed to preserving the ability of these institutions to make decisions that best serve their communities and will oppose legislation that undermines this essential autonomy.

Receive Equitable Funding for College Operations

Illinois community colleges operate high-quality institutions in a lean and fiscally responsible manner. ICCTA advocates for funding to expand job-training programs in high-demand fields. Illinois community colleges will continue to provide critical educational services and to improve student outcomes at a low cost while removing barriers to success so all students have the needed resources to complete their education and enter the workforce.

Champion Equity in Higher Education

Community college trustees promote policies that support access, affordability, equity, and completion for all students. In tandem with efforts taking place on individual campuses to promote equitable participation and foster a welcoming learning environment, ICCTA supports initiatives to eliminate barriers to higher education and close the educational and economic gaps of underrepresented populations.