

# Community College Baccalaureate Degree Program

## HB 5319 -and- SB 4034

This legislation was negotiated last year with stakeholder input, supported by Governor JB Pritzker, and structured to address university concerns. Public universities are neutral on the bill following revisions that added collaboration requirements, duplication protections, and regional caps.

### Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Degrees Open Access for Unserved Students.



#### Working Adults

Community college students are primarily working, place-bound adults—78% work while enrolled, and the average CCB student nationwide is 31-32 years old. For working adults and place-bound students, cost, distance, and rigid scheduling make traditional university bachelor's programs out of reach.



#### Removing Barriers

The impact goes beyond removing barriers for current students. CCB programs reach adults who would not otherwise enroll in a four-year university or in higher education at all. When bachelor's degrees are offered locally, affordably, and flexibly, new students enter the pipeline.



#### Student Demand

Student demand reflects this untapped market: 86% of community college students say they would pursue a local bachelor's degree, and 40% would reconsider earning one if it were available at their community college.



#### Opportunity & Access

CCBs are about access and opportunity—serving working adults and first-time college-goers who would otherwise remain outside the bachelor's degree pipeline.

### Community College Baccalaureate Degree Will Strengthen Illinois' Workforce Pipeline.

Illinois employers in healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and education are struggling to find qualified candidates with bachelor's degrees. CCB programs address this gap by expanding affordable, local pathways for working adults to complete bachelor's degrees. Increased degree attainment strengthens the workforce, raises lifetime earnings, and drives long-term economic growth across the state.



For more information, contact Matt Berry | (217) 785-7411 | [matt.berry@illinois.gov](mailto:matt.berry@illinois.gov)

# The Community College Degree Bill Will:



## Keep community colleges affordable and protect taxpayers:

- Programs must be financially self-sustaining and will not raise property taxes.
- Community colleges may not charge more than 150 percent of their current tuition and fees for upper-division coursework.



## Establish new CCB programs to meet specific local workforce needs and documented student demand:

- Community colleges must conduct feasibility studies demonstrating unmet workforce needs and student demand within their district.
- Proposed degree programs must undergo rigorous review and receive approval from both the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).



## Foster partnership and collaboration with four-year institutions:

- Community colleges must participate in a formal collaboration period with universities to determine whether partnerships can address identified workforce needs before submitting an application.



## Close access gaps for working and low-income students:

- Students gain access to four-year degree programs in high-demand fields that accommodate work and family responsibilities.
- Colleges must demonstrate how programs will expand access to students who are unlikely to pursue a traditional university pathway.



## Avoid unnecessary duplication and limit expansion:

- Any proposed CCB program that overlaps with an existing nearby program or partnership must provide additional justification, including cost, capacity, delivery method, scheduling, and workforce alignment.
- Community colleges are permanently capped at two baccalaureate programs, with additional regional limits on nursing, early childhood, and cybersecurity programs. Programs in technical fields not currently offered within a region are not subject to these caps.