



ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report March 12, 2024

Both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly will meet this week to consider hundreds of bills assigned and posted to committees. While last week was a very busy week – more than 200 bills passed out of committee – this week will be even busier as we approach committee deadlines. The deadline to move bills out of committee in the Senate is March 15, and it is April 5 in the House. It's still early in the spring session calendar, and many of the measures will be subject to further amendments or fail to gain approval once they get to their respective full chambers.

*****Please review [ICCTA's BILL LIST](#).*****

It is vital that we know your positions so that legislation does not slip through unopposed.***

KEY 2024 SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- March 15: Deadline – Senate Bills out of Senate Committee
- March 19: Primary Election
- April 5: Deadline – House Bills out of House Committee
- April 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate Bills in the Senate
- April 19: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in the House
- May 2: **ICCTA LOBBY DAY**
- May 3: Deadline – House Bills out of Senate Committee & Senate Bills out of House Committee
- May 17: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in Senate & Senate Bills in House
- May 24: Adjournment
- May 25-31: *Contingent Session Days for the Budget*

COMMISSION UNVEILS UNIVERSITY FUNDING FORMULA: UNIVERSITIES \$1.4 BILLION UNDERFUNDED

A state commission created in 2021 issued a new report calculating that public universities in Illinois are underfunded by approximately \$1.4 billion. The [Commission on Equitable Public University Funding](#) is made up of 34 members, including legislators, representatives from public universities, and members of advocacy organizations. The commission has been working to develop a formula to bridge the gap in funding. By setting targets for each university and subtracting their established resources, the commission calculated the gap in funding for each public university. Public universities, including all sources of available funding, are currently at 68.5% funding adequacy collectively. It found that dedicating an added \$100 million to \$135 million annually to public universities would allow the state to bridge the funding gap in 10-15 years.

The commission looked at funding models from five states, including Tennessee and California, as well as Illinois' K-12 Evidence-Based Funding model. The commission decided to base the higher education formula on the K-12 model. The K-12 model sets an individual funding adequacy target for each district and calls for an added \$350 million in state funding each year. The bulk of that money is directed to districts that are furthest from the adequacy target. The commission's report will be part of subject matter hearings in the legislature's Higher Education committees.

REPORT: TUTORING BOLSTERS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN ILLINOIS

The Illinois State Board of Education, alongside the Illinois Board of Higher Education and Illinois Community College Board, released a report detailing the progress of the Illinois Tutoring Initiative in boosting student achievement during the 2022-23 academic year. The initiative, aimed at mitigating the impact of the pandemic on student learning, has yielded significant results, particularly in reading and math. According to the report, an analysis of assessment data from 133 schools across 58 districts revealed that nearly 90% of tutored students met or exceeded expected growth in math, while approximately 80% achieved similar results in reading. These findings are underscored by a recent national study from Harvard and Stanford, which identified Illinois as one of only three states to have fully recovered in English language arts post-pandemic.

LAWMAKERS PASS CHICAGO ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD BILL

Illinois lawmakers have voted to transition Chicago Public Schools from an appointed school board to an elected school board. If signed by Gov. **JB Pritzker**, the transition will occur in two phases. In the first phase of elections this November, voters will pick one board member per district for a total of 10 elected members, and Mayor Johnson will appoint a second member in each district, plus a board president. Candidates can begin circulating petitions on March 26. The CPS school board will be a fully elected school board at the following election cycle, as all 21 seats will be up for election in November 2026. From there on, elections will be staggered so half the seats are up for election every two years.

MORE THAN 3,500 ILLINOIS TEENS PRE-REGISTER TO VOTE

Individuals 16 years old or older can now pre-register to vote in Illinois and have their application held until voting age, as part of a new law that went into effect this year. As of March 5, 3,570 individuals have pre-registered to vote. Of that total, 2,954 are 16 years old and 616 are 17 years old.

2024 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

Preparations are underway to host thousands of visitors in Illinois for the April 8 total solar eclipse that will pass over much of the southern third of the state. Staff from multiple state agencies have worked together for more than a year to ensure a safe and successful experience for the influx of eclipse watchers. Southern Illinois is in the path of totality for the second time since Aug. 21, 2017, making it the eclipse crossroads of America. Carbondale and Southern Illinois University are on the centerline of the path of totality and will see 4 minutes and 9 seconds of totality – nearly double what was seen in 2017. SIU is hosting numerous educational and enrichment events during the four days of the eclipse weekend, culminating with a public viewing at the football stadium on April 8 and other activities. The weekend is expected to attract thousands of visitors.

IMMIGRANT HEALTH PLANS TO BEGIN ANNUAL REDETERMINATIONS

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services announced plans to initiate annual redeterminations for enrollees in the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults and Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors programs. This process, beginning on April 1, aims to verify continued eligibility for coverage, mirroring the redetermination process utilized in traditional Medicaid programs. HFS has filed amended emergency rules with the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules to implement this process. Those deemed ineligible or failing to respond will lose coverage by July 1.

PRITZKER ANNOUNCES BIOMANUFACTURING, PRECISION FERMENTATION INVESTMENTS

Gov. Pritzker, alongside Innovate Illinois, announced an investment of \$680 million for the Illinois Fermentation and Agriculture Biomanufacturing Tech Hub in Chicago. This initiative, designated as one of the 31 Economic Development Administration Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs nationwide, aims to propel economic growth and innovation in Illinois. iFAB is spearheaded by the Integrated Bioprocessing Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and 30 other key partners. It focuses on leveraging Illinois' agricultural sector to drive economic growth and innovation for a sustainable future. The iFAB project aims to address emerging market demands for sustainable products by supporting various applications in biomanufacturing, from novel ingredients to sustainable materials.

IDOT OPENS PLANNING, RESEARCH GRANTS FOR LOCAL PARTNERS

The Illinois Department of Transportation has announced the availability of \$7 million in grants for projects aimed at advancing the state's long-range transportation goals. The grants will support activities ranging from planning studies to outreach efforts. Awards will be based on the ability to study or implement goals, strategies, or objectives outlined in IDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan or its multimodal plans, such as those for transit, rail, bike, freight, and highway safety. Eligible activities include planning studies, data collection and analysis, research and program development, performance management, and outreach efforts. Applicants include local and state agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning commissions, and nonprofit entities with public sponsors. The deadline to apply for the grants is April 14.

PRIMIEN'T'S \$400M CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN ILLINOIS' PLANT-BASED FUTURE

Gov. Pritzker joined Primient leadership, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and local stakeholders to celebrate Primient's new investments in Decatur. With this milestone \$400M investment over the next 5 years in infrastructure and operations, Primient will improve refining and drying practices and further ensure quality and reliability for decades to come. A leader in sustainable food and industrial ingredient production, Primient is the sole corn wet miller to replace coal use at every facility with more sustainable energy sources. As a long-term community partner, Primient has increased corn processing capacity by 10 million bushels, locally sourced, and created hundreds of jobs for Illinoisans.

ILLINOIS LEADER APPOINTED TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S APPRENTICESHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The U.S. Department of Labor has announced the appointments of 30 members to serve on the Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship to advise the Secretary of Labor on issues related to the national apprenticeship system. As part of the announcement, Daniel Serota, a member of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board and chair of IWIB's Apprenticeship Committee, was appointed to serve on the committee. As vice president of

government and public Affairs at Aon, he will serve as an employer representative on the committee. Committee members will provide advice and recommendations aimed at enhancing and modernizing apprenticeship programs across the country.

\$8.5 MILLION CEJA COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY GRANT PROGRAM

DCEO has launched \$8.5 million in funding for the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program. The program supports community-based organizations and technical service providers in low-income and historically disadvantaged communities to plan, develop and execute community solar projects. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity process. The goal of this grant program is to provide upfront seed capital funding to overcome barriers to project development caused by lack of capital in historically disadvantaged communities.

FOLLOWING US SUPREME COURT DECISION, IL LAWMAKERS SEEK TO SAFEGUARD WETLANDS

Sen. **Laura Ellman** (D-Naperville) and Rep. **Anna Moeller** (D-Elgin) have introduced the Illinois Wetlands and Small Stream Protection Act, filling the void left by a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that weakened federal safeguards under the Clean Water Act. The court's May 2023 ruling in *Sackett v. EPA* shifted the responsibility of wetland protection to the states. The proposed legislation would establish a program under the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, requiring developers to obtain permits before impacting wetlands. It also includes provisions for avoiding destruction and compensating for environmental losses.

TOP CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

Concerns about subpar home repairs and remodeling topped Illinois Attorney General **Kwame Raoul's** Top 10 list of consumer complaints in 2023. Illinoisans complained of poor quality and no-shows on a range of repairs from fixing gutters and roofing to new construction. The second most prevalent complaint was identity theft, with consumers reporting breaches of information and having credit cards taken out in their names. Raoul released the analysis of 19,450 written complaints and thousands of phone calls in time for National Consumer Protection Week. Here are the remaining top complaint categories:

- Suspect consumer debt services, such as mortgage lending
- Used vehicle sales including warranties
- Promotions/schemes involving phone, work-at-home and lottery scams
- Internet and mail-order products
- Telecommunications including cable and satellite TV, telemarketing and wireless phones
- Auto repairs
- New auto sales, including financing
- Federal, state and local governments

For more information on state legislative and public policy issues, please contact:

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