



ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report
April 1, 2024
APRIL IS COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH

Lawmakers were away from Springfield last week for the spring break typically scheduled around the Easter holiday, although both chambers held Appropriations Committee hearings in Chicago each day except Friday. The Illinois House is back in session this week, while the Senate continues with its break for one more week.

A handful of proposals considered during the appropriations hearings, including one ([Senate Bill 3462](#)) that would create a task force to consider the feasibility of implementing a guaranteed income of \$1,000 per month to certain Illinoisans, including new parents, caregivers, and students. Another measure ([SB 3626](#)) would extend the eligibility period for Illinois’ Child Care Assistance Program for low-income families. Multiple proposals (i.e. [SB 3399](#) and [SB 3593](#)) were also discussed that would use state money for recruiting and retaining workers in Illinois’ healthcare industry.

Illinois’ primary election results will be certified this week. One race was so tight that it was just finalized on Friday after 10 days of vote tabulation. Clayton Harris conceded after the AP called the Cook County State’s Attorney race, with Eileen O’Neill Burke edging out Harris by a mere 1,556 votes. It’s a slim margin but likely too large for an expensive recount.

*****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

- 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*

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION APPROVES ADDITIONAL \$5.8B IN STUDENT DEBT FORGIVENESS

The Biden Administration has announced the approval of \$5.8 billion in additional student loan debt forgiveness for 77,700 borrowers in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. The debt relief includes borrowers who have benefitted from the limited PSLF waiver as well as regulatory changes. Total forgiveness

through PSLF now stands at \$62.5 billion for 871,000 borrowers since October 2021. Prior to the fixes to the PSLF program, only about 7,000 borrowers had ever received forgiveness, according to Biden officials.

An additional nearly 380,000 borrowers who are within two years, or 24 qualifying payments, of receiving forgiveness under PSLF will also receive an email from President Biden starting this week thanking them for their service and notifying them that if they continue in their public service work, they will be eligible for forgiveness within that time frame. The announcement brings the total loan forgiveness approved by the Biden administration to \$143.6 billion for 3.96 million Americans. In Illinois, 33,870 borrowers so far have received forgiveness totaling \$2.4 billion under the PSLF.

ILLINOIS WORKS BID CREDIT PROGRAM

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is now accepting applications for the Illinois Works Bid Credit Program, part of the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act. Designed for contractors engaged in or interested in state-funded capital projects, the Illinois Works Bid Credit Program offers opportunities to earn bid credits by employing and retaining graduates of the Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program. These bid credits, or virtual dollars, can be accumulated when contractors hire and retain ILW Pre-apprenticeship Program graduates enrolled in a U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program and when these graduates work on state-funded capital projects or any construction project.

Contractors participating in the program can earn up to six years of bid credits for each hired and retained ILW Pre-apprenticeship Program graduate, enhancing their competitiveness in future bids for state capital projects. In addition, contractors have the option to pool bid credits with others to bolster their bids. More information is available [HERE](#).

PRISONER REVIEW BOARD MEMBER RESIGNS FOLLOWING PAROLEE DOMESTIC MURDER CHARGE

The longtime chair and a relatively new member of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board have resigned. The Governor's office announced the pair's resignations within hours of each other nearly two weeks after Crosetti Brand was released from Stateville Correctional Center. Brand is now charged with stabbing his pregnant ex-girlfriend and killing her 11-year-old son the day after his release.

NEW DIRECTOR OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE APPOINTED

Gov. JB Pritzker has appointed Robert Vickery, a leader in juvenile justice reform for nearly two decades, as the next director of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, pending Senate approval. Vickery currently serves as interim director of IDJJ, following the selection of previous director Heidi Mueller to lead the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in February. Before his position as interim director, Vickery served as the deputy director of programs from 2017 to 2024.

IDJJ OPENS PEACE CENTER

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice recently celebrated the grand opening of a newly repurposed secure youth facility that will specialize in vocational, career, educational, and life skills development opportunities for high school graduates ages 17-20 who are in the custody of IDJJ.

IDOC HOSTS FIRST CORRECTIONS WELLNESS FOR FAMILIES COURSE

The Illinois Department of Corrections hosted its first 'Corrections Wellness for Families' class for adult family members of frontline employees in southern Illinois. IDOC's Staff Wellness Response Team presented the course to family members from seven correctional facilities, who spent the day at John A. Logan College navigating how corrections work realities can impact family life. The course marks the first time a state correctional agency in the United States has extended a staff wellness program to family members.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AWARDS NEARLY \$700K IN GRANTS

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs has allocated almost \$700,000 in grants through the Veterans' Cash Grant Program for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2024. These grants aim to support organizations across the state that provide essential services to veterans and their families. The funds, derived from proceeds of the Winter Riches Illinois Lottery ticket, will aid programs addressing veteran homelessness, post-traumatic stress treatment, workforce development, education, transportation training, and community development. Since its inception in 2006, the Veterans' Cash Grant Program has allocated over \$20 million to approximately 400 veterans organizations statewide.

BLOCH QUANTUM TECH HUB PLANS ANNOUNCED

Gov. Pritzker and Innovate Illinois have announced a multi-year plan for The Bloch Quantum Tech Hub to develop quantum technology solutions for pressing issues such as fraud detection, grid resilience, and drug discovery by accelerating industry adoption to drive research commercialization — an initiative that is projected to generate \$60 billion in economic impact for the Chicago metro area over the next decade. The coalition, which includes Fortune 500 companies, quantum startups, universities, state and city governments, community colleges, and economic and workforce development nonprofits, developed the plan as part of its application for Phase 2 funding through the U.S. Economic Development Administration Regional Technology and Innovation Hub program.

The Bloch led the Chicago metro area in earning a designation as one of 31 U.S. Tech Hubs during Phase 1 of the program. During Phase 2, the agency will award Implementation Grants to designated Tech Hubs to propel their regional growth in technology through initiatives in workforce development, business and entrepreneur development, technology maturation, and infrastructure enhancement. Substantial state investment is included in the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget for developing quantum technology and a state-of-the-art quantum campus, including a cryogenic facility crucial for quantum technologies and next-generation microelectronics. Should its Phase 2 bid be funded, The Bloch is expected to create 30,000 quantum jobs, train 50,000 workers, and support 200 quantum companies by 2035.

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

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