



Illinois Board of Higher Education

MEMORANDUM

TO: ECACE Consortium Institutions
FROM: Ginger Ostro, Executive Director
DATE: September 29, 2022
RE: Request for Proposals: Early Childhood Faculty Preparation (ECFP) Grant
Due Date: October 28, 2022 @ 5:00pm

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) seeks proposals from ECACE Consortium institutions to provide programs to cohorts of graduate students interested in completing a master’s program and/or to pursue a doctoral program to become faculty in Illinois higher education programs. For the purposes of this grant, we use the term “faculty” broadly to reflect those who teach candidates to become early educators or advance their competencies working with young children birth to age eight in early childhood classrooms, preschool, and congregate care settings. This might include faculty, instructors, and adjuncts. We recognize that many institutions require a doctoral program. Therefore, this grant might be used to help candidates earn a master’s or begin a doctoral program. The grant opportunity is part of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) initiative. ECACE is co-led by the IBHE and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, and Illinois Department of Human Services.

The Consortium is a key growth strategy of IBHE’s strategic plan, “[A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Pathways to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#).” Created through [Public Act 102-0174](#), the purpose of the Consortium is to make higher education accessible and affordable for members of the incumbent early childhood workforce and eliminate barriers to recruitment, retention, and degree completion.

The expected outcomes of ECACE are a stronger early childhood workforce; advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); seamless pathways for students; and a higher education system that is meeting the needs of adult learners. Additionally, the Consortium has set a goal of enrolling and persisting or completing nearly 5,000 students by September 2024. Key to achieving these goals is enough well-prepared, diverse early childhood faculty.

A significant number of education faculty in the U.S. are likely to retire during the next decade, given the average age of 59 for full College of Education professors.¹ Ensuring a robust pipeline of faculty candidates is critical. Additionally, faculty members in degree-granting undergraduate institutions in the U.S. do not

¹ American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2022). *Colleges of Education: A National Portrait*. <https://www.aacteconnect360.org/viewdocument/colleges-of-education-a-national-p-3>

reflect the diversity of the student body.² Nearly 33% of U.S. undergraduates are Black or Hispanic, compared to 9.5% of faculty.³ Colleges of Education tenure-track faculty are overwhelmingly White.⁴ Racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and others forms of diversity in the collegiate space may have positive effects on both the educational experiences and outcomes of students. For minority students, racially diverse faculty often serve as role models and mentors, even encouraging students to pursue graduate programs.⁵ In addition, they may help elevate unheard voices and ensure all students have a seat at the table.

The percentage of students that enroll, receive doctoral degrees, and become faculty is significantly lower for underrepresented groups.⁶ Between 1976 and 2018, the representation of Black and Hispanic students in the Ph.D. pipeline reduced from 13.5% to 6.9% and 10.7% to 7.3%, respectively. Conversely, White students increased from 65% to 70.5%.⁷ This substantial narrowing for underrepresented groups pursuing doctoral degrees plays a persistent role in the continued underrepresentation of these students in higher education faculty. Efforts to recruit faculty of color will be limited without a continued and sustained effort to encourage a student population to pursue careers in academia.

Effective early childhood faculty need to be prepared to work with students to increase their disciplinary knowledge, develop their ability to support adult learners, and build skills needed to be successful in academia. These skills include performing graduate-level research, developing professional acumen, expanding the use of their experience and knowledge, and adjusting to academic life. Faculty candidates should also have culturally competent expertise, understand the principles of equity and systemic racism, and be able to adapt instruction to different learning styles.

To attract, recruit, and ensure the success of diverse working adults seeking to become faculty, programs should be responsive to their needs and embed an equitable and inclusive approach. Academic, financial, social, and tailored support services that enable educators to navigate the world of graduate programming and academic life are critical. The provision of a mentor or coordinator who serves as a primary point of contact can support students to navigate the system and access academic and professional support. Cohort-based programs contribute to student success by developing social ties, networking, and relationships that foster a sense of community and collegiality among students. Group cohesion amongst a cohort nurtures professional skills and results in greater student engagement that maximizes persistence and increases retention.⁸

² National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *IPEDS: Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, Indicator 20: Undergraduate Enrollment*. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_reb.asp

³ Southern Regional Education Board. (2021). *Now is the time to Focus on Faculty Diversity*. https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2020_dspbrieff.pdf?1611778131

⁴ American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2022). *Colleges of Education: A National Portrait*. <https://www.aacteconnect360.org/viewdocument/colleges-of-education-a-national-p-3>

⁵ American Federation of Teachers. (2010). *Promoting racial and ethnic diversity in the faculty*. <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/facultydiversity0310.pdf>

⁶ Southern Regional Education Board. (2021). *Now is the time to Focus on Faculty Diversity*. https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2020_dspbrieff.pdf?1611778131

⁷ Southern Regional Education Board. (2021). *Now is the time to Focus on Faculty Diversity*. https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2020_dspbrieff.pdf?1611778131

⁸ Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education. (2019). *Higher Education Cohort Reports*. https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/5_PD29019_College_Cohort_Report.pdf

IBHE seeks graduate and doctoral programs to expand the pipeline of early childhood faculty by recruiting and supporting cohorts of diverse candidates in ECACE Consortium institutions to complete a degree to become faculty in Illinois higher education programs. The (ECFP) grant focuses directly on advancing equity and increasing the diversity of faculty, key strategies of *A Thriving Illinois*. Through this grant, IBHE will increase access to innovative higher education graduate and doctoral programs for early childhood. This will provide diverse and possibly marginalized professionals the opportunity to become higher education faculty members and progress in their careers. Therefore, IBHE seeks programs in ECACE institutions with flexible academic programs and limited in-person requirements for candidates who may be primarily working adults.

Eligible Institutions: Institutions must be a member of ECACE, authorized to operate in the State of Illinois as a public or non-profit institution of higher education; hold institutional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission; have campuses physically located in Illinois; and offer graduate programs in education, child development, early childhood education, or other disciplines that prepare candidates to become early childhood faculty.

Grant Period: The grant period will be from approximately December 15, 2022, to June 30, 2024.

Grant Funding: Institutions may apply for grants in the amount required to implement the proposed program of study within the term of the grant. If the full program of study to acquire a degree extends beyond the grant period, this must be indicated.

Grants to institutions are provided by federal Child Care Development Block Grant stimulus funding through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Application Deadline: Application materials may be submitted via email to ecace@ibhe.org. Please include the subject line ECFP (for Early Childhood Faculty Preparation) Grants. Applications must be received by 5:00 pm on October 28, 2022, to be considered for funding. IBHE anticipates announcing decisions the week of November 28, 2022.

Appeals: Denied applicants may choose to appeal. The appeal must be received by 5:00pm of the 14th day after the date that the first grant award notice has been published. The appeal must be given in writing, is deemed delivered upon receipt, and must be delivered via email to ecace@ibhe.org.

The written appeal shall include at a minimum the following:

1. The name and address of the appealing party,
2. Identification of the grant, and
3. A statement of reasons for the appeal.

Contact Person: For more information on this application, contact Christi Chadwick, Project Director, ECACE at ecace@ibhe.org. When emailing, please use the subject line ECFP (for Early Childhood Faculty Preparation) Grants.

Background and Program Specifications

The Illinois Board of Higher Education is offering a competitive grant opportunity to ECACE Consortium institutions with graduate programs in Illinois to implement innovative, tailored, responsive cohort programs, and support for graduate students. Students will attain a graduate degree and be prepared to become faculty members in early childhood education programs at Illinois community colleges and Illinois universities.

The grants will support the expansion of faculty pipelines at Illinois' institutions of higher education through programs that equip candidates with the appropriate knowledge and competencies for this career. Future faculty members will be instrumental in training the next generation of professionals to work in early childhood education programs for young children birth through second grade. The grants will provide institutions with funding to provide financial assistance and cohort-based support for candidates to seek graduate degrees. Priority will be given to those who propose programs that will be completed within the term of the grant or are accompanied by a plan to support students through completion with alternative funding.

Graduate and doctoral cohort programs to prepare faculty should support those with a background in early childhood, child development, early elementary education (K-2), or other related fields. These programs should cultivate emerging research skills, develop subject-matter expertise, equip candidates to provide competent teaching for adult learners, and prepare candidates to work with diverse groups of students. This may include, but is not limited to, students from under-resourced backgrounds, students from various culturally and racially diverse backgrounds, and students with disabilities. To promote an equitable and diverse faculty workforce, we seek institutions that will embed diversity, equity, and a sense of belonging, into program offerings that promote inclusion.

Proposals should include carefully designed offerings that respect prior workforce knowledge, provide broadened opportunities for access, and have a variety of learning modalities. These opportunities, optimal for working adults, limit in person and on campus time and provide a variety of services available to support candidates to develop future-ready instructional approaches. Proposals may also include post-graduation support services, such as preparation for successful job searches in Illinois, applying to doctoral programs, or post-doctoral work.

The intention of the grant opportunity is to award up to \$4,000,000 in grants for at least three cohorts of students. Applicants can propose cohorts with 12 – 20 candidates for master's degrees, and/or a variable number in doctoral cohorts, with grants potentially ranging between \$500,000 to \$1,100,000, depending on the proposal and the number of students.

Goals of the Early Childhood Graduate Grant

For the purposes of this grant, the broad definition of "cohort" is a group of candidates progressing through a program together, with opportunities to engage with one another, build networks, and access support provided for their overall success.

The primary goals of the grant are to:

- Increase the diversity of early childhood faculty in Illinois
- Expand the educational pipelines to increase the number of people preparing to become early childhood faculty in Illinois
- Contribute to the advancement of the next generation of higher education faculty with graduate degrees who achieve strong early childhood competencies, knowledge of effective adult education practices, and skills to teach courses in colleges and universities
- Promote equitable opportunities to access, persist, and complete graduate degrees through the provision of tuition costs and coordinators of the program

Grant Requirements

Successful applicants will:

- Demonstrate wider institutional support for the program from the institution's academic leadership
- Offer a graduate or doctoral program of study designed to prepare a diverse group of early childhood professionals to become Illinois faculty
- Describe the program model for recruitment of a diverse group of post-baccalaureate candidates, and enrollment process.
- Demonstrate how this funding will allow for opportunities that would be challenging for candidates to achieve otherwise
- Validate the ability to provide experience for diverse graduate students that will prepare them to teach in an Illinois academic program
- Make curricular adjustments to accommodate the needs of working adults and diverse learners, including one that requires minimal campus attendance, provides virtual learning experiences, and offers planned opportunities and experiences to be together in person
- Designate a "coordinator" or mentor, who will help navigate the complex higher education network of departments and support academic challenges associated with graduate studies
- Have the capacity to provide wrap around services for adults that allow for greater candidate success, including things like customized advising, coaching/mentoring, leadership development, and the resources and supports necessary
- Identify and address barriers to access, persistence, and completion through the program
- Agree to participate in a professional learning community with other grantees
- Include a plan and budget to assess the outcome of the Early Childhood Faculty Preparation (ECFP) Grant
- Outline ways in which the applicant will assess the success, impact, and lessons learned from the program

Priority

During the review process, additional consideration, and points post-graduation support services, such as preparation for successful job searches in Illinois, applying to doctoral programs, or post-doctoral work are given for proposals that meet one or more of the following priority items. These items are not required for award.

- Illustrates the completion of the program within the grant period or provides a plan for students to complete after the grant term, potentially with alternative funding
- Has an existing long-term commitment to cultivate faculty to instruct adults and to include them in your institution as part of the community
- Has a long-standing tradition of preparing educators, particularly faculty
- Offers career, leadership, and/or professional opportunities, which might include things like opportunities to teach adult learners; opportunities to work with early childhood scholars in the in Illinois and/or nationally; professional membership and/or participation in conferences; exposure to academic and/or career resources; and access to other institutional resources
- Has a demonstrated capacity for innovation in supporting the student lifecycle and needs
- Fosters the development and implementation of innovative cohort models that reflect the experience and needs of students

- Includes a plan to leverage other sources of funding or in-kind contributions, and support by the institution, particularly if the program of study cannot be completed by the end of the grant
- Includes post-graduation support services, such as preparation for successful job searches in Illinois, applying to doctoral programs, or post-doctoral work
- Provides a pathway to continuing opportunities to continue to a doctoral degree for master's level candidates

Funding Allowances

Funding can be allocated to plan and implement this specialized program for diverse faculty candidates. Allowable costs include the following:

- Faculty or other personnel salaries or stipends to build pathways, forge partnerships, or teach courses in lieu of tuition
- Books and other materials and supplies
- Student support services, such as tutoring and coaching, student success mentors, writing coaches, childcare, transportation, or other support aimed to mitigate barriers to success
- Compensation for coordinator or current faculty with release time
- Operational and instructional costs to the institution, including course fees or other fees, in return for a waiver of tuition and fees
- Participant support costs may be subject to pre-approval, and institutions are not allowed to draw indirect upon these costs

Fiscal Information

Grants to eligible institutions are supported by federal Child Care Development Block Grant stimulus funding through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Review of Proposals

Proposals are reviewed by a committee convened by the IBHE using a scoring rubric. All applicants are notified of awards via an email message to the institution's primary grant contact. IBHE anticipates notifications to be made by November 28, 2022.

For more details, refer to the scoring guide at the end of this RFP.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please review the attachments carefully. The following may be used as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

1. **Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance (Attachment 1):**

This form must be complete, dated, and signed by the President/CEO or approving authority of the institution.

2. **Listing Of Entities Participating in The Grant (Attachment 2):**

Include a list of entity names, staff involved, addresses, phone numbers, and emails.

3. **Proposal Narrative (Attachment 3):**

Limit to 15 double spaced pages. Within the proposal narrative, please:

- Describe how your program will address the goals and requirements of this grant. Please provide pertinent data or information to support the need, including:
 - Description of the specialized program offered
 - Description of the courses and format (online, hybrid) of courses and options for candidate engagement, remote or in person
 - Description of the recruitment strategies for the cohort
 - Description of how the program meets the needs of the masters or doctoral candidate
 - Description of how your institution will provide supports to meet the needs of a diverse, and different candidate than you typically might include in your program
 - Describe strategies your institution will use to recruit, enroll, and maximize completion of a diverse, well-educated cohort of learners
 - Describe any previous successful recruitment efforts and completion of a graduate or doctoral program for a diverse group of candidates
 - Describe how this funding will allow for opportunities that would be challenging for candidates to achieve otherwise
 - Describe how you will prepare a diverse cohort of candidates to be early childhood faculty who can prepare for a well-qualified, culturally competent diverse early childhood workforce
 - Provide details of learning and professional development opportunities students can access through your program and the grant
 - Describe or list of performance measures/standards, and strategies by which you will measure the success of the grant
 - Include your institution's history and expertise in developing and cultivating faculty in education (this may include faculty composition and examples of previous students that have become early childhood faculty)
 - Include a timeline and brief workplan for the grant, which includes implementation of the program of study
 - Include a statement of agreement to participate on calls or meetings related to grant monitoring, provide your own internal program evaluation, and engage in learning opportunities
 - Include willingness to hire or designate a coordinator or mentor for students in the cohort
 - (Optional) Describe how the grant will address one or more of the items listed in the Priority section above
4. **Required Documentation:**
- Letter of support from both the Dean of the college AND the Provost, indicating institutional support for faculty participation, institutional flexibility to support innovation and grant requirements, and capacity for implementation (Required)
 - Letters of support from potential partners, organizations, or entities, if any (Required only if any other entity is receiving part of the grant funding)
 - Documentation of any in-kind services or support, resources, or funding to be used for the project (Optional)
5. **Uniform Budget Template (Attachment 4):**

Complete the budget form for each category, including a detailed narrative of the estimated expenditures in the budgeted category. Funds shall be used for services and goods necessary to:

- Develop and implement a program for students to become early childhood faculty, including personnel costs
- Ensure a coordinator, mentor, or single point of contact
- Recruit, retain, and support educators (excluding promotional materials or “swag”)
- Ensure the resources allow the candidates to have the support needed to be successful and persist and complete the degree
- Track and report grant measures of success
- Participate in a professional learning community and have regular communications with IBHE
- Participate in evaluation efforts of the grant initiative

Allowable Costs: Allowable expenditures include but not limited to the following:

- Operational and instructional costs to the institution, including course fees or other fees, in return for a waiver of tuition and fees
- Books
- Personnel costs and related benefits; all faculty and staff compensation related to the grant must be identified in detail via the personnel costs and benefit sections of the Uniform Budget Template
- Other needed materials and supplies
- Student support services, including tutoring and coaching, student success mentors, writing coaches, childcare, or other support aimed to mitigate barriers to success.
- Some participant costs may be subject to pre-approval, and institutions may not charge indirect cost on these. Please identify participant costs detail in the Grant Exclusive Line-item section of the Uniform Budget Template, Attachment 5 Participant costs are direct costs for items such as stipends or substance allowances, travel allowances, or other expenses paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training projects

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs for this grant opportunity are limited to 10% of modified total direct costs. Institutions may charge up to 10% on cost factors deemed allowable in their federally negotiated rate. Or, if institutions do not have an agreed upon rate, they may charge 10% of the MTDC as outlined below.

Code of Federal Regulations § 200.68 [Modified Total Direct Cost \(MTDC\)](#).

MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

Prior Approval: Prior approval is required for the following:

- Equipment (useful life at least 1 year, unit acquisition cost at least \$5,000)
- Participant Support Costs, including things like childcare and transportation
- Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense

Unallowable Costs: Unallowable costs include:

- Salaries of an individual at a rate in excess of Federal Executive Schedule Level II, \$203,700 as of Jan 1, 2022
- Food or “swag”
- Capital expenditures or construction

Items 6 – 8 are for informational purposes only and not required as part of the request for proposal submission.

6. Project, Expenditure Reporting and Grant Payments:

Each grantee is required to submit quarterly Periodic Program Reports, Periodic Financial Reports, and payment requests.

The anticipated submission dates for these reports will be the following:

<u>Project Period</u>	<u>Submission Due Date</u>
Period 1 – Execution to March 31, 2023	April 15, 2023
Period 2 – April 1 to June 30, 2023	July 15, 2023
Period 3 – July 1 to September 30, 2023	October 15, 2023
Period 4 – October 1 to December 31, 2023	January 15, 2024
Period 5 – January to March 31, 2024	April 15, 2024
Period 6 – April 1 to June 30, 2024	July 15, 2024

7. Scoring Rubric:

Below is rubric framework with which reviewers will rate proposals, including program content, inclusion of DEI principles, learning and professional opportunities, history and capacity, impact of the grant, and recruitment. Priority recognition will be weighted more heavily than required items. Other required items such as accreditation, required documentation, and budgets will also be taken into consideration before making an award.

Criteria	Maximum Points
<p>Quality of Program Content</p> <p>Description of the program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model of delivery • How the program will respond to the needs of adult learners and address the need for diverse faculty in early childhood education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course content that contains effective practices for teaching and learning for young children and their families ▪ Course expectations that respect the needs of adult learners and equips them with the knowledge and skills for a career in educating adult learners in an Illinois higher education program 	25 points

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the program’s model of delivery meets the needs of working adults. ▪ Student satisfaction, previous success with cohorts of diverse students, and ways the program meets their needs ▪ Evaluation process for measuring quality and effectiveness <p>Priority recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completion of the program within the grant period, or detailed plan for funding and completions post grant 	
<p>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)</p> <p>Description of the program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How this funding will allow for opportunities that would be challenging for candidates to achieve without supports in your program ▪ Strategies to support and address building the capacity of a more diverse early childhood faculty, including specific plans to retain this cohort ▪ Barriers to access, persistence challenges, and completion throughout the grant period, or financial plan to support completion 	20 points
<p>Learning and Professional Opportunities</p> <p>Description of the program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities and learning experiences for graduate students that meet the needs of a changing and challenging landscape in early childhood ▪ Opportunities for candidates to participate in professional activities, such as being a part of a cohort, instructional opportunities with undergraduate students, research-based projects, professional networks, job opportunities, and connections to scholarly parts of the early childhood field ▪ Inclusion of innovative ideas for delivery, adjustments, or enhancement to the current curriculum ▪ Inclusion of wrap around support, tools and methods for student engagement and completion (mentors, counselling, guest speakers/faculty, etc.) <p>Priority recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A demonstrated capacity for innovation in supporting the student lifecycle and needs 	20 points
<p>History and Capability</p> <p>Description of the program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institutional commitment and experience in developing experts in early childhood education and supporting adult learners ▪ Current faculty composition and evidence of access to networks and building professionals in the sector ▪ Previous examples of successful institutional initiatives to develop and support early childhood experts 	15 points

<p>Priority recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An existing long-term commitment to cultivate faculty to instruct adults and to provide extensive support within the institution as part of the community ○ The capacity to offers career, leadership, and/or professional opportunities, which might include things such as: opportunities to teach adult learners; opportunities to work with early childhood scholars in the in Illinois and/or nationally; professional membership and/or participation in conferences; exposure to academic and/or career resources; other resources that your institution has ○ The development and implementation of innovative cohort models that reflect the experience and needs of students 	
<p>Impact of the Grant</p> <p>Description of the program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance standards established to assess and measure the goals and impact of the grant ▪ Evaluation plan for the grant, either completed internally or externally, that includes the program, faculty, and candidate experience <p>Priority recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A plan to leverage other sources of funding, or in-kind contributions, and support by the institution ○ A pathway to continuing opportunities to continue to a doctoral degree for master’s level candidates, or post-doctoral studies for doctoral candidates 	10 points
<p>Recruitment</p> <p>Description of the program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing and recruitment strategies to advertise, target, attract, and retain diverse candidates for this specialized program <p>Priority recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Successful recruitment efforts, showing acceptance and retention levels for previous years for your program that represent diverse groups (race/ethnicity, language, gender, disability) 	10 points
Total Points	100 points