

RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE COHORT INITIATIVE

A QUALIFIED AND DIVERSE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE remains a high priority in Illinois. The Illinois Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT) grant offered the opportunity to identify and implement effective strategies to support professionals, particularly bilingual and infant-toddler teachers. The Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, through RTT, provided a \$500,000 allocation to the Gateways Scholarship Program to develop and implement such a strategy.

The result included flexible statewide educational cohorts for over 180 teachers to obtain their English as a Second Language (ESL) or Bilingual endorsement through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). These cohorts were designed to help Illinois school districts fulfill a July 2017 requirement for Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) funded programs.

Participating school districts and Regional Offices of Education (ROE):

- Recruited and vetted staff
- Outlined their financial commitment and needs

Minimally, staff agreed to:

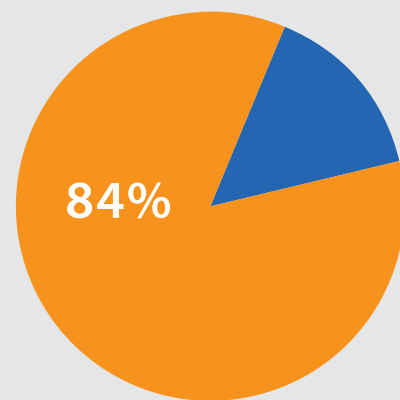
- Become a Gateways Registry member
- Apply and be accepted to a participating higher education institution

Participating higher education institutions:

- Worked with their community
- Delivered courses in the most convenient manner and location

Special **Thank You** to all community collaboration groups!

84% OF SCHOOL-BASED AND COMMUNITY-BASED DISTRICT STAFF RECEIVED THEIR ENDORSEMENT.



Community Collaborations

Chicago Public Schools, National Louis University, and University of Illinois at Chicago

Rockford Public Schools and Northern Illinois University

ROE 49 - Rock Island County Regional Office of Education and Western Illinois University

ROE 07 - South Cook County - Intermediate Service Center and Olivet Nazarene University

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