



ECACE

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS
CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

11.27.23



**Illinois
State Board of
Education**



ECACE was created to support working adults to access higher education and complete credentials and degrees.



Consortium Charge:

- Support the upskill of the incumbent early childhood workforce and employers
- Increase access, persistence, and completion of credentials and degrees
- Advance equity
- Streamline, coordinate, and improve accessibility to education pathways
- Expand pipelines

ECACE will help Illinois meet Governor Pritzker's Smart Start goals.

Illinois is already grappling with an early childhood workforce shortage.

Smart Start will address preschool deserts and expand slots by 20,000 over the next four years.



isbe.net/preschool



To staff these classrooms, Illinois will need:

- **1,000 teachers** with a bachelor's degree and Professional Educators License
- **1,000 assistant teachers** with an associate degree.

Workforce Supports

Scholarships
& COA 

Navigators,
Mentors

Relief for
Financial Holds

Navigators support the workforce to connect with colleges and universities.

Activities	AY 22-23
Emails for Outreach or Technical Assistance	79,263
Phone Calls	7,720
Meetings for Outreach or Technical Assistance	4,249
Meeting With Colleges and Universities	802

Thanks to [the navigator], I have been able to discover my dreams and believe 100% that I can achieve them. **(Student)**



All the students we enrolled this year came from our navigators. They just keep bringing them. We have had to open more sections. We had 10 last year, and now we have 67. **(Institution)**



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Institution outreach to early childhood workforce members and employers expanded significantly in AY 22-23.

Outreach:

- Held over **1,700 events**
- With over **26,000 participants**

Recruitment
fairs/open houses

Virtual and in-person
sessions with childcare
centers

Four-year institutions
attending open
houses at community
colleges

Presentations and
booths at conferences

Collaborations
between institutions
and higher education
navigators

Partnerships with
local community
organizations to host
career fairs

Employers:

- Engaged over **6,000 employers**, including child care providers and school districts

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Mentors play a vital role for students.

Over 100 mentors, at least one at every institution in the Consortium.

Our mentor is an integral part of the program...the glue holding together the whole pathway from recruitment to persistence to completion and transfer.

One of the most valuable resources for student persistence.

Relationship-based, personalized supports help students persist.

The support role of the mentors has been life changing for our students!



ECACE Scholarship

What's Covered: Tuition & fees and funding up to the full cost of attendance* at a [Consortium Institution](#)

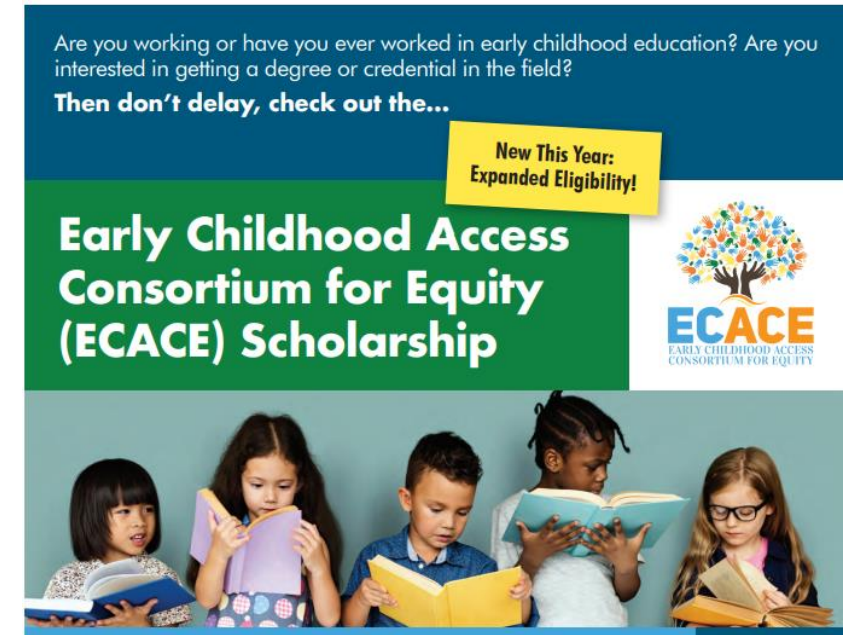
Eligibility: Incumbent Workforce

- Work or have worked in child care, preschool, family child care, Head Start, etc.

Those seeking:

Undergraduates seeking an AAS or a Bachelor's degree in early childhood

- AA students pursuing early childhood (select community colleges)
- Post-baccalaureate work (select Consortium institutions)
 - Professional Educator License (PEL)
 - Additional endorsements (EC, ESL, Bilingual, Special Ed)
 - Master's Degree for those seeking teacher licensure



Workforce Supports

Scholarships & COA ISAC

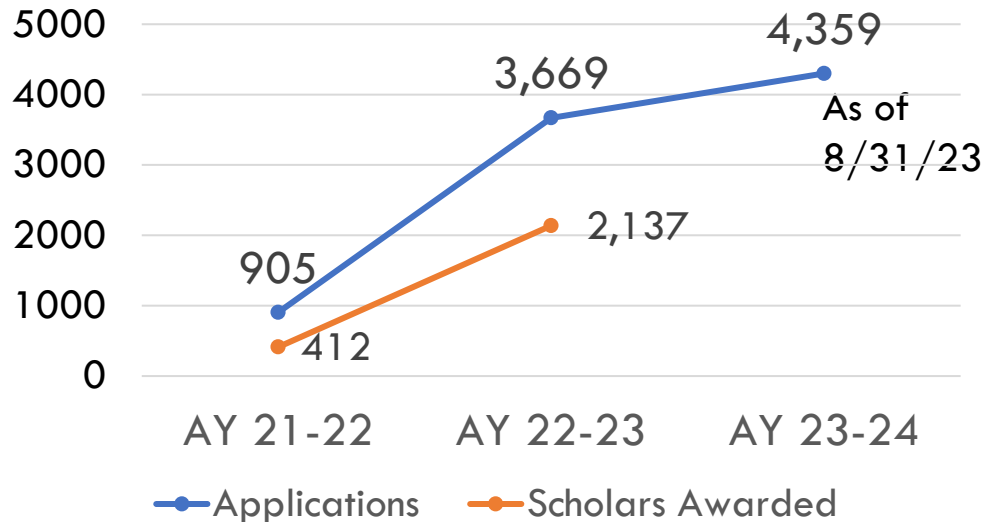
Navigators, Mentors

Relief for Financial Holds

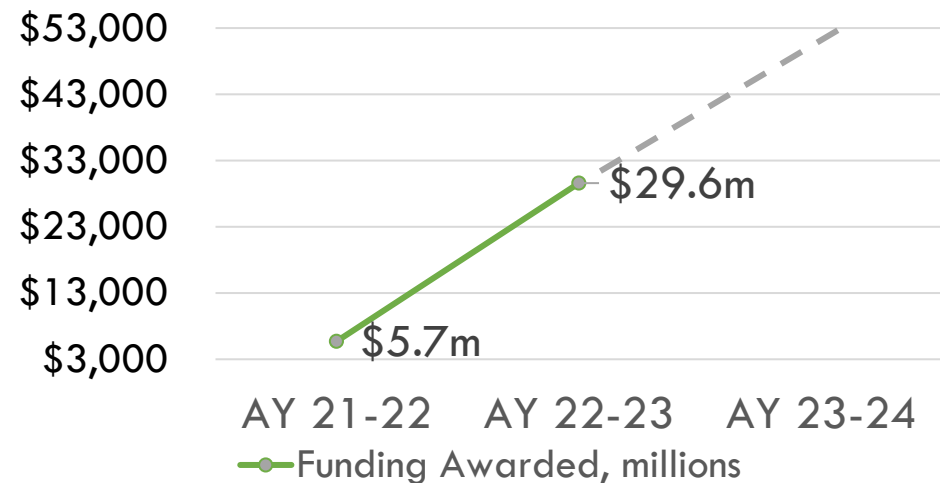
ECACE Scholarship applications and awards have grown substantially.

- In AY 22-23, over 3,600 applications led to nearly \$30m in funding to over 2,000 students.
- As of end of August 2023, ISAC received 19% more applications than in all of AY 22-23.

Applications & Awards



Funding Awarded (millions)



Note: AY 23- 24 awards amounts are not yet available, as institutions are verifying eligibility and requesting payment for fall.

ECACE Scholarship

What's Covered: Tuition & fees and funding up to the full cost of attendance*

AY 2022: Soft Launch Year

- First awards in March 2022
- \$5.7M to 412 students

AY 2023: Significant Growth

- \$29.6m to over 2100 students

AY24: As of end of October

4,939 applications

4,179 “prequalified”

\$24.8m disbursed

“I thought that I would go back and finish my degree in a few more years, but once I heard about the ECACE scholarship, I **jumped at the chance to go back and finish.**”

Without this scholarship, there is no way that I would be able to afford to go back and complete my education at the university level.”



Adia Walker, ECACE Scholarship Recipient at Northern Illinois University



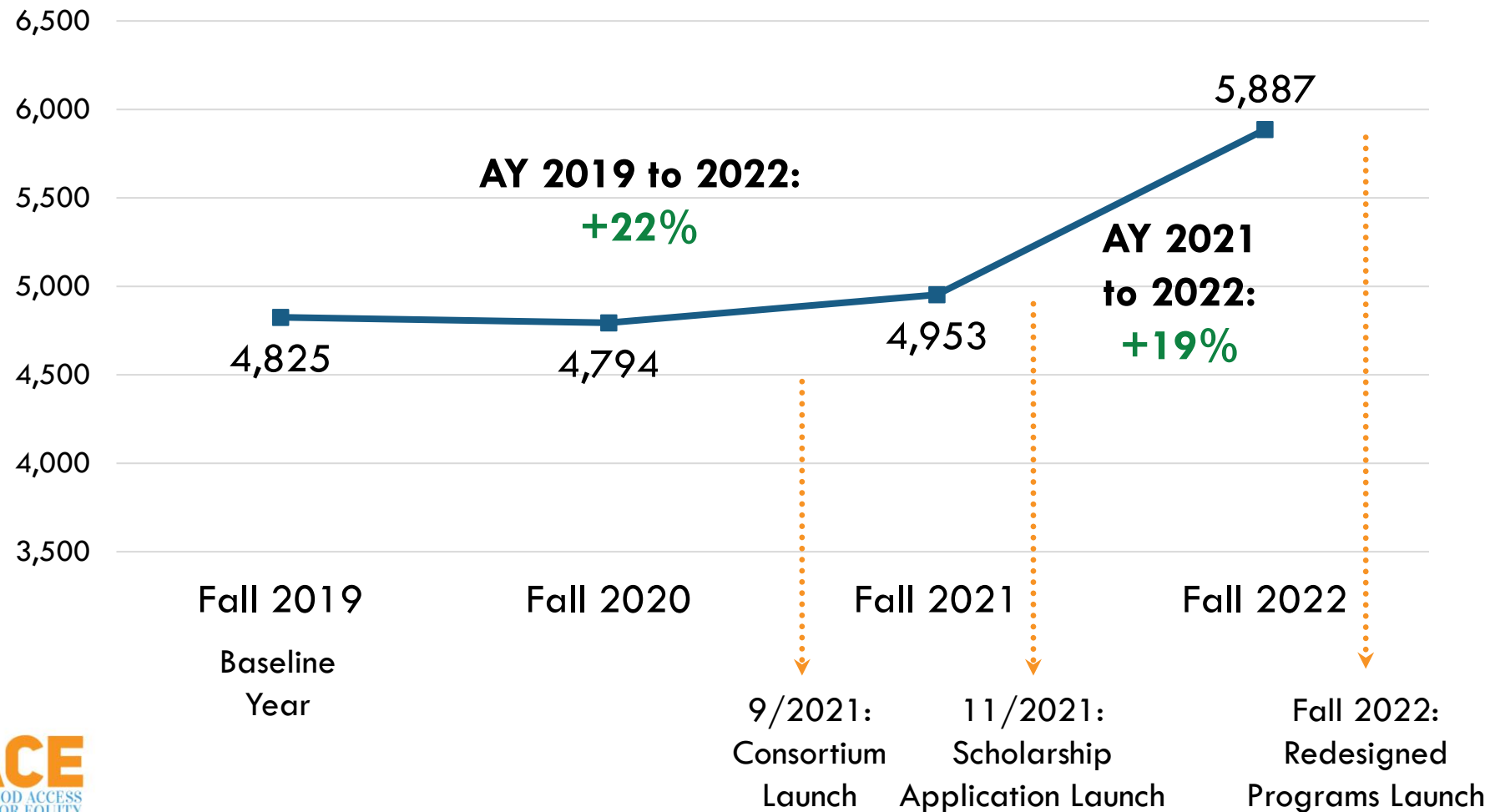
*Grant amount at a private institution is capped at the highest public institution rate.



Consortium early childhood programs Fall 2022 enrollment up 19% from Fall 2021 and 22% from Fall 2019. (preliminary data)

Fall 2022 is preliminary draft data; not just incumbent enrollment

Fall Enrollment Change in Early Childhood Programs, Fall 2019 – Fall 2022



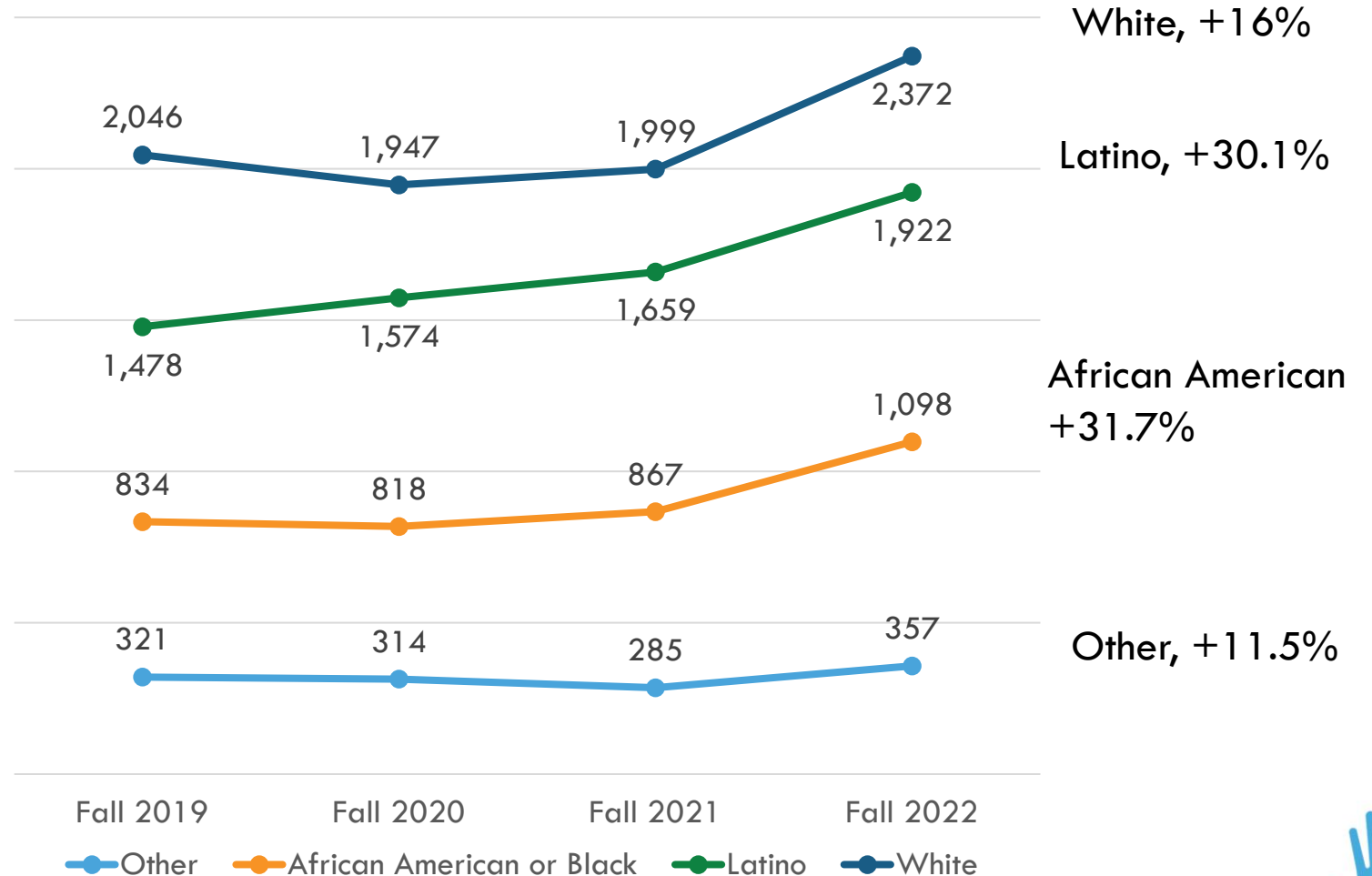
Enrollment increased for White, Latino, and African American/Black students from Fall 2019 to Fall 2022.

Enrollment increased for:

- White (+16.0%)
- Latino (+30.1%)
- African American (+31.7%)
- Other (+11.5%)

Fall 2022 is preliminary draft data; not just incumbent enrollment

Fall Enrollment Change in Early Childhood Programs, by Race
Fall 2019 – Fall 2022



Questions?

To request a navigator or to learn more about ECACE: <https://ecace.org/>

To apply for a scholarship: <https://www.isac.org/ECACEscholarship>

For Questions About ECACE:
Ecace-info@ecace.org

