



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

Illinois Professional Development System

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Gateways to Opportunity?

www.ilgateways.com

1. What is Gateways to Opportunity?

Gateways to Opportunity is a statewide network supporting the professional development of Illinois early care and education, school-age and youth development, and family support professionals working with children from birth to age 21.

2. Who would benefit from the information available through Gateways to Opportunity?

Gateways to Opportunity provides information on professional development pathways and opportunities for those who work in the following program areas:

- Early childhood programs in licensed family child care and center-based settings, as well as those in relative, friend, and neighbor care
- Early childhood special education
- Early intervention
- Public education
- Family support
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Out-of-school time programs
- Youth development programs
- Two- and four-year colleges and universities
- Home visiting programs
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Other early childhood programs and settings

3. How can Gateways to Opportunity help me?

Gateways to Opportunity provides a source of information on services and benefits to help practitioners in Illinois advance their career, education, salary, and job status.

You can find out about...

- **Professional Development Advisors**—Work with individuals to learn about career choices and earning degrees, certificates, and credentials.
- **Credentials and Career Lattice**—Learn about the Illinois Career Lattice and what would be required for you to earn an ECE, Infant Toddler, Illinois Director Credential, School-Age and Youth Development Credential, Family Child Care Credential, Family Specialist Credential, and Technical Assistance Credential. [find: <http://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/career-lattice?highlight=WyJjYXJZXiLiLCJsYXR0aWNliwiY2FyZWVvYlGxhdHRpY2UiXQ==>]
- **Scholarships and Compensation**—Get information on Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Programs [find: <http://www.ilgateways.com/index.php/financial-opportunities/scholarship>]

Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)—programs for college students including state and federal grants, scholarships, loans, and college prepaid tuition programs [find: <http://www.collegezone.com>]
Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers), a wage supplement program [find: <http://www.ilgateways.com/index.php/financial-opportunities/great-start/faq>]
Professional Development Funds available through your local child care resource and referral agency [find: <http://www.inccrra.org>]
Illinois Job Board with job listings across the state [find: <http://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/job-board>]

- Higher Education Directory of 2- and-4 year institutions and their programs

4. Who sponsors Gateways to Opportunity?

Gateways to Opportunity is administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) [find: <http://www.inccrra.org/>] with funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services [find: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx>].

5. How were the Gateways to Opportunity Credentials and Career Lattice developed?

The career lattice and credentialing system were designed by the Professional Development Advisory Council, [find: <http://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/pdac>] which is made up of highly qualified practitioners, educators, and advocates around the state. See the FAQ in this resource—“What is PDAC?” The credentials provide a strategy for supporting and improving the preparation and compensation of professionals working with children, youth and families in Illinois.

Last revised: 1/2022