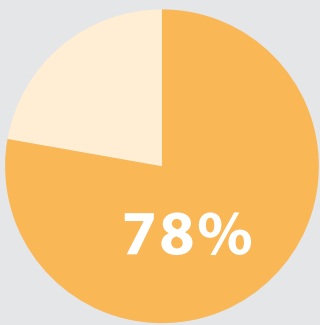


RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT INITIATIVE

Establishing effective targeted solutions that support a qualified and diverse early childhood workforce in Illinois remains a high priority. Two years ago a time-limited education reimbursement initiative was created and implemented as part of the Illinois Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. This initiative aimed to help individuals in early care and education settings apply for and receive reimbursement for items such as tuition, fees, or outstanding student debt to Illinois higher education institutions. The following information summarizes recipients at this time. This data was collected through various means including administrative data and survey responses.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA INDICATES:

78% OF RECIPIENTS WERE ABLE TO MAKE PROGRESS IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:



23% COMPLETE A DEGREE

51% SUBMIT OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

53% APPLY FOR AND OBTAIN ONE OR MORE GATEWAYS CREDENTIALS

60% PARTICIPATE IN OTHER GATEWAYS PROGRAMS

SURVEY RESPONSES INDICATE:

60% OF THE RECIPIENTS INDICATED THAT **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** TO SUPPORT COLLEGE COURSEWORK WAS A **SIGNIFICANT BARRIER** TO CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION.

60%



OVER **80%** OF RECIPIENTS INDICATED THAT THEY WERE **ABLE TO ENROLL** IN A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY AFTER RECEIVING AN EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT.



"To me it is a program that appreciates and acknowledges teachers. The teachers need and want help. Thank you for acknowledging my hard work and believing in me." -Anonymous

"This education reimbursement allowed me to continue and earn a degree. Money was really tight and I thought I would have to quit or delay school." -Anonymous

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