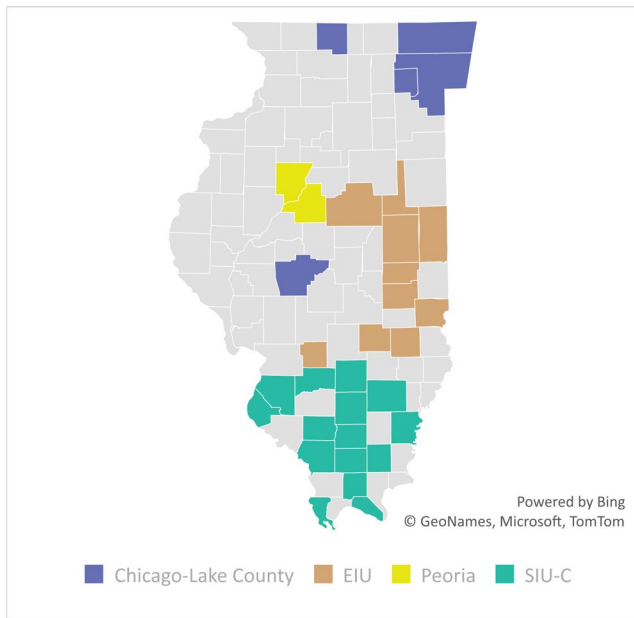


GROW YOUR OWN TEACHERS

Illinois schools face the twin challenges of a shortage of teachers and the need for a more diverse teacher workforce. Grow Your Own Illinois (GYO-IL) is well-positioned to help address those challenges. With funding from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, our consortia programs recruit, support, and prepare racially and economically diverse teacher candidates across the state (Figure 1). Our candidates remain locally connected, returning to their home communities to teach. Our mission and efforts align with the Illinois State Board of Education’s objective to increase the percentage of teacher candidates of color enrolled in Illinois educator preparation programs.

Figure 1: Where GYO-IL’s candidates come from, FY22

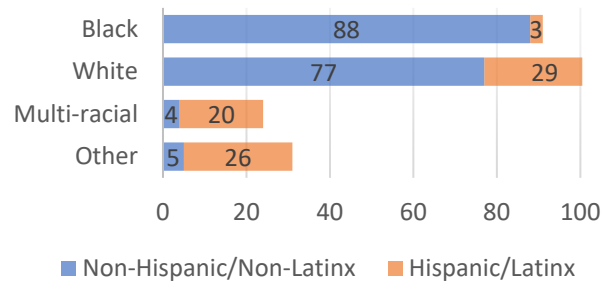


GYO-IL consortia prepare teachers for richly diverse classrooms and give locales additional support in addressing acute and chronic teacher shortages. **In FY 22, GYO-IL served a racially and ethnically diverse group of 253 prospective teacher candidates across Illinois in four consortia** – Eastern Illinois University (EIU), Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIU-C), Peoria, and Chicago-Lake County – **with more than two-thirds of our candidates (175 of 253) identifying as people of color** (Figure 2).¹

¹ The number of candidates in Figure 1 is 252. One candidate opted not to provide demographic identifiers.

² Nine candidates exited the GYO program in FY22 without graduating.

Figure 2: GYO-IL Candidate Racial/Ethnic Demographics, FY22



Of the 253 participants:

- **47 (18.6%) are new to GYO-IL,**
- **147 (58.1%) are continuing their multi-year licensure programs and are on track to graduate, and**
- **50 (19.8%) graduated.**²

Of our 50 candidates who graduated during FY22, 39 are full-time classroom teachers and three are working as long-term substitute teachers. All 42 are working in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff positions (e.g., STEM, Special Education, Bilingual Education).³

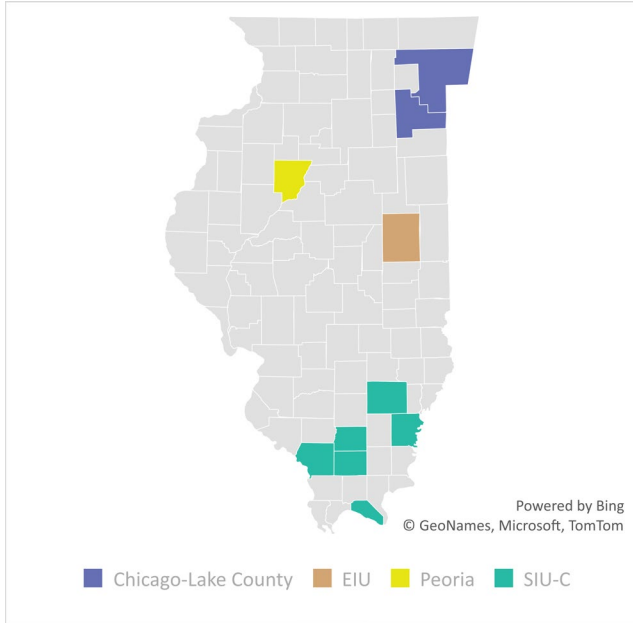
“[As a student], I had this one specific teacher in high school. She was from Little Village, and I was from Pilsen...Whenever the ‘sh hit the fan,’ I ran to this teacher for support and guidance. She’s still very much present in my life. I hope that as I transition into this teacher role, I can be that for some students moving forward.”**

– Chicago Graduate, ELA, Fifth Grade

GYO-IL is unique in its recruitment and backing of teacher candidates who are locally focused and reflective of their student and community populations. Many of our graduates take pride in returning to their home communities to teach. Looking at a map of where our FY22 graduates are now teaching, it is evident that recent graduates are continuing their teaching careers in their home communities (Figure 3). This means that GYO-IL addresses teacher shortages in urban and rural areas across the state, with more than one-third of **its FY22 graduates coming from our downstate programs.**

³ All 42 have received their Professional Educator License. An additional five candidates have graduated from their teacher preparation programs and are still working to meet their licensure requirements. Information was not available for three graduates.

Figure 3: Where GYO-IL's FY22 graduates are teaching



“The GYO Program has provided me with a way of achieving my dreams of being a teacher. GYO has allowed me to go back to school without quitting my job. The GYO and its many supports are there to help me on this journey to receive my PEL.”

– SIU-C Candidate, Special Education

GYO-IL’s teacher support program provides forgivable loans for tuition, books, and fees. **In FY22, GYO-IL disbursed nearly \$1.3 million in forgivable loans to its 253 teacher candidates** (Table 1).⁴ Tuition dollars and additional assistance helped attract non-traditional teacher candidates and enabled them to persist in their teacher licensure programs.

Table 1: GYO-IL Forgivable Loans, FY22

	Candidates	Forgivable Loans ⁵
Chicago-Lake County		
Chicago	126	\$517,626
Lake County	8	\$42,446
EIU	38	\$260,679
Peoria	23	\$68,831
SIU-C	58	\$406,524
Grand Total	253	\$1,296,104

⁴ Under current regulations, candidates admitted to GYO consortia are eligible for forgivable student loans for tuition, books and fees associated with completion of their teacher preparation program, provided those expenditures are not otherwise paid for through grants-in-aid or other

Our graduates recognize the importance of tuition support, given the expense of college. However, they note that financial assistance also comes in the form of a program structure that allows them the flexibility to stay in their current employment.

“It wasn’t easy. It was difficult for me to pay for my classes and support myself and my kids, but here I am, a graduate. ...Without the financial support, I wouldn’t have been able to go to school. I think what helps us a lot more is the support we get—the monthly meetings, the advisors constantly checking on us, the support from peers. I’ve never seen or heard anything like what GYO has created...and that’s helped me and kept me going. I was able to thank God and thank GYO for everything.”

– Chicago Graduate, Bilingual, Elementary Education

GYO-IL offers a full range of resources to cover the hidden costs of attending college (e.g., childcare, transportation, technology, etc.). Additionally, GYO-IL provides academic assistance, mentoring, professional development, and peer networking opportunities. Together, these supports inspire our candidates to thrive in their programs and ultimately become classroom teachers.

“I feel like GYO offers real-life preparation.”

– Peoria Graduate, High School ELA

Candidates’ university-based programs offered academic and hands-on classroom experience, setting a solid foundation for teacher candidates’ success. GYO consortia programs provided additional value by addressing broader societal and cultural dynamics affecting students and their communities.

Currently, with four consortia and 147 continuing candidates, we anticipate welcoming 112 new teachers to Illinois schools in the next two years. With additional state funding, our pipeline can continue to expand, particularly given our low attrition rate.

To learn more about GYO-IL, visit us at:
www.growyourownteachers.org

resources of the consortium. GYO loan amounts vary and take into consideration other forms of financial aid.

⁵ Loan amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.