

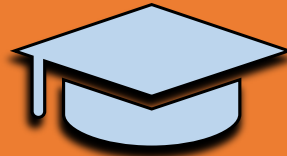


**ISAC
FAFSA
SYMPOSIUM**

The First Generation Scholars Network

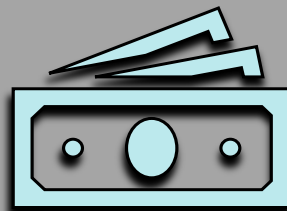
Abel Montoya
Director of Outreach Operations
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

About ISAC



Our Mission Statement

“Providing Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable”



We are the college access and financial aid agency in the State of Illinois that administers scholarship, grant, prepaid tuition, and student loan repayment/forgiveness programs.

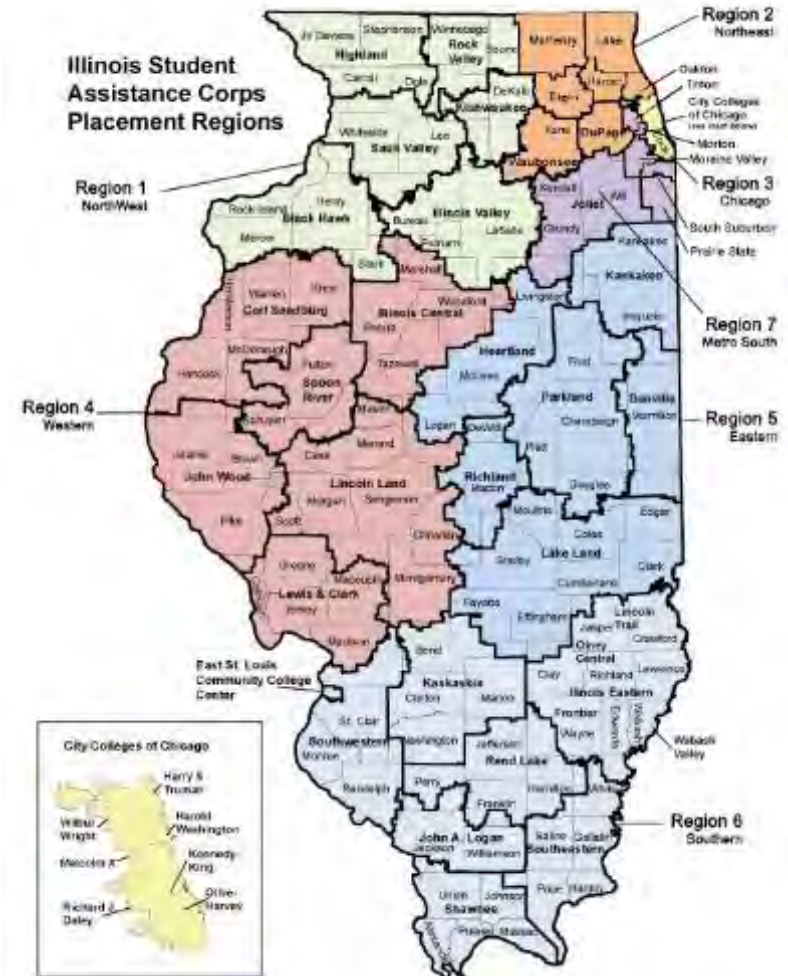


ISACorps

- Near-peer model began in 2009
- Approximately 85 college grads of diverse backgrounds
- Work in the communities in which they live
- Majority are first-gen and/or MAP recipients

ISACorps Placement

- 1 – 3 Corps members per community college district
- 6 – 8 community college districts per ISACorps Region
- 7 ISACorps Regions in Illinois



ISACorps Outreach

- Assist students (and families) overcome academic, financial, and social barriers to higher education through presentations, workshops, and one-on-one meetings
- Represent ISAC at college fairs, financial aid nights, conferences, and related outreach events
- Foster college-going culture in communities throughout Illinois
- Proactively reach out to students who may be low-income and/or will be first generation college students

Commons Barriers of First Generation Students



- Feeling alone in their journey
- Lack of knowledge of campus resources
- Difficulty navigating college terminology
- Difficulty with financial aid process
- Experiencing culture shock once on campus

First Gen Student Experiences



Lexi - "I came from a small town of about 1,750 and graduated from a class of 88. Transitioning to a school of 20,000+ people was difficult, especially because I didn't really know anyone else there besides my brother, but I had a lot of encouragement from family to go to college." - St. Bede Academy

Celeste - "I struggled with being away from my family. I struggled with deciding what to pursue, and school in general, but I decided to pursue a degree because of how much higher education was stressed to me. I always had it in my head that I needed to go." - Thornton Fractional South HS

First Gen Student Experiences



Anayeli - "My parents are immigrants and they always pushed me to pursue a higher education as a way to have a better life and have access to mobility. I also value higher education because knowledge is something that can't be taken away from you and has value." - Morton East HS & Morton College

Emberly- "I struggled to connect with other students and make friends. I was a commuter student, and I would typically describe myself as introverted, so I struggled to make friends when I was in college. I always knew I wanted to do something in education, and I knew that to do that, I needed to go to college. I am now pursuing a graduate degree." - Mt. Zion HS

First Gen Student Experiences



Leah - "It was hard for me to transition from a large city like Chicago to a small town. Honestly, the moment I stepped foot on campus, it was a complete culture shock. My transition to college was a struggle in itself, but when I entered my senior year, I also struggled with not knowing what I wanted to do with my life after college. I felt so much internal pressure from myself and external pressure from others to figure out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, and I had no idea."
- George Westinghouse College Prep

Iris - "Acclimating to the culture of being at a PWI (predominately white campus), along with finding a 'home away from home,' finding support systems, and dealing with imposter syndrome was a challenge." - Jones College Prep

First Gen Scholars Network (FGSN)

- Provide support over summer to help combat summer melt
- Provide one-on-one assistance from ISACorps members
- Connect students to first gen and near peer programs at colleges in Illinois
- Connect students with other first gen students on campus
- Outreach events specifically for first gen students
- Hear stories from current first gen college students and first gen college graduates

Going to College Summer YouTube Series



- Home
- Shorts
- Subscriptions
- Library
- History
- Your videos
- Watch later
- #ISACCollegeMinut...
- Show more

Customize channel Manage videos

Illinois Student Assistance Commission
@ISACvid 168 subscribers 103 videos
ISAC is the Illinois college access and financial aid agency, helping student...
isac.org and 4 more links

HOME VIDEOS LIVE **PLAYLISTS** COMMUNITY CHANNELS ABOUT

Created playlists

- Going to College Summer Series** (9 videos)
- ISAC College Minute™ First Generation Scholars Network (5 videos)
- #ISACCollegeMinute: First Generation Scholars Network (5 videos)
- #ISACCollegeMinute: College Planning and College-Going (12 videos)
- #ISACCollegeMinute: Financial Aid (11 videos)
- ISAC Facebook Live (32 videos)

www.youtube.com/@ISACvid/playlists



Join us on YouTube Live Monday, July 27 at 2 p.m.
Going to College Summer Series on Being Away From Home for the First Time
July 27 at 2 p.m.

Going to College Summer Series

Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Public
9 videos 70 views Last updated on Aug 4, 2023

Play all Shuffle

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- Commuting: Perks & Challenges**
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16:34
- Student Clubs & Organizations: How Do I Choose?**
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30:57
- Remembering to Take Care of You: Self-care for Your Body, Emotions, and Mind**
Illinois Student Assistance Commission • 48 views • Streamed 3 months ago
20:38
- How to Make New Friends in College**
Illinois Student Assistance Commission • 83 views • Streamed 3 months ago
13:16

Building Community

- FGSN provides support and programming after high school graduation
- Helps students develop a sense of belonging as they transition to college
- A sense of belonging can improve persistence through first term and first year of college
- ISAC & ISACorps work with high school students across the state and works to connect them to each other



Start Browsing



Juan Martinez Herrada



Ashley Juarez



Sofia Martinez



Kamryn Rowe



Aaron Cendejas



Gladys Ramirez Mata



Brittany Kane



Serena Tripp



Corazon Rivera



TeKavin Russell



Samantha Bott



Sakura Boone



FGSN Yearbook

Welcome to the First Generation Scholars Network!

If you will be the first in your family to earn a college degree, join our network to get support and resources from ISAC, your peers at your college, and colleges across the state! If you are heading to your first year of college this fall, we've got events and programs that can give you tools, resources, mentoring, and a great network of connections to make your transition and first year of college a whole lot easier—and successful.

- [Connect with a First Generation Scholars Network Mentor](#)
- [Find the First Generation Network or Mentoring Program on Your Campus](#)
- [Join us for the "Going to College" YouTube Summer Series](#)
- [Join us for a "Check-in" Event](#)

Connect with a First Generation Scholars Network Mentor

Our team of recent college graduates is your resource for all your questions and concerns about transitioning to college. We've been where you are, had a lot of the same questions, fears, and experiences you might be having. We are here to listen, answer questions, offer suggestions, connect you with the places on your campus that can assist you, and connect you with a network of peers like you.

First Generation Scholars Network Mentors

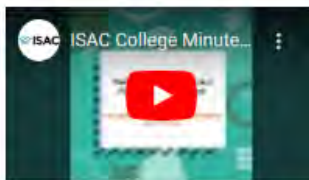
 Denisse Diaz Assigned district: JOUETT JUNIOR COLLEGE Denisse.Diaz@illinois.gov (815) 641-7596 Additional Language: Spanish	 Michael Emerson Assigned district: KANKAKEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Michael.Emerson@illinois.gov (815) 336-0375	 Catherine Throm Assigned district: LEWIS AND CLARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE Catherine.Throm@illinois.gov (618) 429-0002	 Kristen Latham Assigned district: DUVE-HARVEY COLLEGE Kristen.Latham@illinois.gov (773) 805-0382
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Join the Network

Ready to join?
You can join using our online form

[JOIN NOW!](#)

Have questions? Email us at
ISAC.FirstGen@illinois.gov



Check out more First Generation Scholars Network videos

Joining FGSN



It's easy to join the First Gen Scholars Network!



<https://studentportal.isac.org/FirstGen>

FGSN Engagement

- Students receive updates and reminders on FAFSA and Alternative Application availability
- Students can text questions directly to ISAC
- Students are invited to events customized for first gen students:
 - “Headed to College Celebration” in May
 - “Going to College Summer YouTube Series” hosted by ISACorps, topics include:
 - “How to Have a Good College Experience on a Budget”
 - “Being Away from Home for the First Time”
 - “Keeping Sane: Balancing School, Work, and Family”
 - “Commuting: Perks & Challenges”
- On campus meet & greet
- FAFSA/Alternative Application completion workshop in the fall

Partnering with High Schools

- Share information on FGSN webpage & FGSN postcard
- Host presentations/discussion on being a first gen student and going to college
- Potentially help create a first gen student group at school
- ISACorps members work with students one-on-one or in group settings

Partnering with Colleges

- One point of contact at college needed to work with ISAC corps member assigned to college
- Provide space for ISAC to hold a financial aid application completion workshop (FAFSA & Alt Application) in the fall
- Work together to support and connect students with campus resources and supports



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Thank you!

Abel Montoya
First Gen College Graduate