
23 ILLINOIS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE CH. XIX, SEC. 2755
JOURNALISM STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER XIX: ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

PART 2755
JOURNALISM STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: Implementing Section 65.130 and authorized by Section 20(f) of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act [110 ILCS 947/65.130 and 20(f)].

SOURCE: Adopted at 50 Ill. Reg. 9504, effective June 25, 2026.

Section 2755.10 Summary and Purpose

- a) The Journalism Student Scholarship Program was created *to encourage academically talented Illinois students to pursue careers in journalism, especially in underserved areas of the State, and to provide those students with financial assistance to increase the likelihood that they will complete their full academic commitment and elect to remain in Illinois to pursue a career in journalism.* [110 ILCS 947/65.130]
- b) This Part establishes the rules which govern the Journalism Student Scholarship Program. Additional rules and definitions are contained in General Provisions, 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2700.

Section 2755.15 Definitions

"Local News Organization" has the meaning given to that term is defined in 815 ILCS 412/10 of the Strengthening Community Media Act and will be used to define a local news organization for this scholarship program.

"Underserved Area" means an area that meets one of the following four qualifications:

poverty rate of at least 20% according to the latest American Community Survey;

35% or more of the families with children in the area are living below 130% of the poverty line according to the latest American Community Survey;

at least 20% of the households in the area receive assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); or

the area's average unemployment rate that is more than 120% of the national unemployment average for a period of at least 2 consecutive calendar years preceding the date of the application. [35 ILCS 10/5-5]

Section 2755.20 Applicant Eligibility

A qualified applicant shall:

- a) *be a resident of Illinois;*
- b) *be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen;*
- c) *be a high school graduate or have received a State of Illinois High School Diploma or General Education Development (GED) certificate or the equivalent from another state;*
- d) *be enrolled or accepted for enrollment, on at least a half-time basis at an institution of higher learning;*
- e) *be pursuing a postsecondary course of study in journalism or a related field leading to a career in journalism; and*
- f) *maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution. [110 ILCS 947/65.130]*

Section 2755.30 Program Procedures

- a) The Journalism Student Scholarship Program application must be submitted annually and is available on ISAC's website. In order to receive priority consideration for an award, the application, including all required documentation, must be completed and received by a priority date established and posted on the ISAC website each year that will precede the academic year for which the scholarship is being requested.
 - 1) The Journalism Student Scholarship Program application is available on ISAC's website.

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- 2) If the scholarship application is incomplete, ISAC will notify the applicant. The applicant will then have an opportunity to furnish the missing information; however, the application will only be considered for processing as of the date when the application is complete and received by ISAC.
- b) Award funds shall be applicable only toward tuition and fees for an award year after other financial aid received, up to a maximum of \$5,000.
- c) Within the constraints of annual appropriation levels, two semester or three quarter term payments are made directly to the institution.
- d) ISAC shall select recipients from among those who have submitted complete applications and have supplied required information, including qualified timely renewal and new applicants.
- e) Awarding priority shall be given to renewal applicants, meaning those who were paid a Journalism Student Scholarship benefit in the previous award year, who continue to meet the eligibility requirements. Preference will be given to applicants preparing to work in underserved areas.
- f) The total number of awards in a given fiscal year is contingent on available funding. If funding is insufficient to pay all eligible applicants, awarding will be based on the date the completed application is received by ISAC.
- g) Each qualified applicant who is selected to receive an award shall be notified by ISAC. Applicants not receiving the award will also be notified.
- h) The total amount of funds awarded to a qualified recipient in any given academic year, when added to other financial aid available to the qualified recipient for that year, shall not exceed tuition and fees. If the amount of financial aid to be awarded to a qualified student exceeds the institution's cost of attendance, the scholarship shall be reduced by the amount by which the cost of attendance is exceeded.
- i) ISAC pays award funds directly to the institution of record in the name of the recipient.
- j) *The qualified applicant must agree to sign an agreement under which the recipient pledges that within the 2-year period following the termination of the academic program for which the recipient was awarded a scholarship, the recipient shall:*

- 1) *begin working in journalism in this State for a period of not less than 2 years;*
- 2) *fulfill this obligation at local news organization; and*
- 3) *upon request of the Commission, provide the Commission with evidence that the recipient is fulfilling or has fulfilled the terms of the teaching agreement provided for in this subsection. [110 ILCS 947/65.130]*

Section 2755.40 Institutional Procedures

- a) The institution shall submit eligibility information for qualified applicants in sufficient time for ISAC to make award announcements.
- b) Scholarship awards are paid directly to the approved institution of record that certifies to ISAC that the applicant is an eligible recipient.
 - 1) ISAC will annually establish priority claim dates for the submission of payment requests and inform schools of the required priority dates.
 - 2) Late payment requests will result in delayed processing of payments. Payment requests are processed in the sequence of receipt by ISAC and as funds are available.
 - 3) Institutions may submit their payment requests beginning 10 days prior to the start of classes for the term for which payment is being requested.
- c) ISAC shall disburse scholarship funds in two or three installments, depending on the number of terms financed by the scholarship. Multiple disbursements shall not be required in cases where the applicant's eligibility is not determined until the final term of the academic year for which the scholarship is being awarded or when a student is attending only one term and the maximum award does not exceed the student's cost of attendance.
- d) Funds shall be remitted by ISAC to institutions on behalf of the recipients.
- e) Upon receipt of scholarship funds, the institution shall verify the recipient's enrollment status for the term for which the award was intended. If enrolled, the institution may credit the scholarship funds to the recipient's account for expenses due and payable. The balance of the disbursement shall be released to the recipient.

- f) Upon receipt of the scholarship funds, if the recipient has withdrawn from enrollment for the terms for which the award was intended, the institution shall return the amount of the scholarship payment to ISAC.
- g) The scholarship is applicable only toward tuition and mandatory fees. The total amount of scholarship assistance awarded to a qualified applicant in an award year, when added to other financial aid available to the qualified applicant for that year, cannot exceed the cost of attendance.
- h) To provide sufficient time for processing and vouchering through the State Comptroller's Office in Springfield, all payment requests must be received by ISAC no later than July 1.