

ISAC Operational Update and Program News

December 17, 2025



Agenda

- 2024-2025 Enrollment Verification
- 2025-2026 Operational Update
- 2026-2027 Operational Update
- Important Dates
- ISAC Contact Information
- Questions

2024-25 Award Year Fiscal Year (FY) 2025

Program Service Requirements: Enrollment Verification

- Every fall semester, ISAC requests enrollment verification for students who are receiving funds from scholarships that have program requirements.
- ISAC monitors scholarship recipient's fulfillment of the program service requirements.
- Enrollment Status Verification will open after the New Year.
 - ISAC will update school with this information once it becomes available.
- If a recipient fails to meet the applicable requirements, **the award converts to a loan that must be repaid.**
 - Enrollment verification due date is **TBD**
 - This year we will request enrollment verification for MTI and SETTW scholarships in the fall semester.

Program Service Requirements: Enrollment Verification

- Outside of the main enrollment verification window, requests are primarily sent by the ISAC Program Service Requirements Enrollment Verification Department:

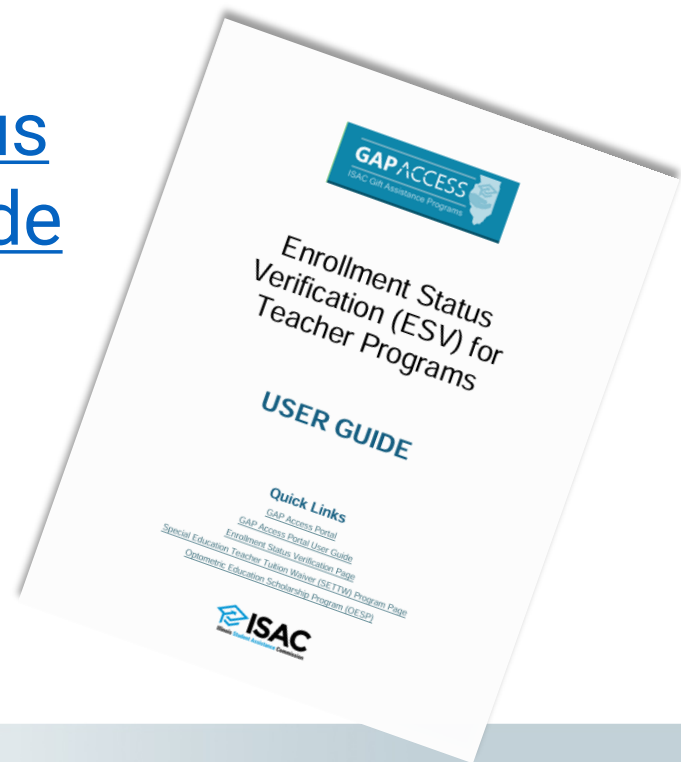


isac.proreq@illinois.gov

- Enrollment status verification allows ISAC to communicate with recipients regarding the steps they need to take to fulfill the program service requirements.
 - Prompt submission of enrollment verification data to ISAC will help expedite communication with impacted award recipients.
- Example requests include:
 - Providing the award amount,
 - the last date of attendance in the qualifying program,
 - providing the current enrollment status and effective date.

Enrollment Status Verification (ESV): Quick Links

- [Enrollment Status Verification \(ESV\) Webpage](#)
- Updated: [Enrollment Status Verification \(ESV\) User Guide](#)



2025-26 Award Year Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

FY26 ISAC Program Appropriation Summary

Gift Assistance Programs

- MAP – \$721,566,200
- ECACE Scholarship – \$5,000,000
- Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois – \$10,750,000
- MTI Scholarship – \$8,000,000
- Nursing Education Scholarship (NES) – \$4,000,000
- Grant Programs for Dependents of PFC Officers – \$1,300,000
- Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship – \$1,100,000
- Grant Program for Exonerees – \$150,000
- Post-Master of Social Work Scholarship Program and School & Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program (combined appropriation) – \$2,000,000
- ING Grant and IVG reimbursement – \$6,000,000
- AIM HIGH Grant – \$50,000,000
 - Funds are disbursed in lump sums by ISAC to public universities

FY26 ISAC Program Appropriation Summary cont.

Loan Repayment Programs

- Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment – \$7,500,000
- Human Services Professional Loan Repayment – \$1,250,000 (plus remaining FY25 funds)
- Illinois Teachers Loan Repayment – \$975,000
- Nurse Educator Loan Repayment – \$400,000
- Veterans' Home Medical Providers' Loan Repayment – \$26,400

Clarification regarding General Provisions (2700) Changes for AY24-25

- The administrative rules adopted by the Commission became effective on October 31, 2025.
- These rules include requirements that would ordinarily apply to the 2024–2025 academic year. However, because that award year is fully closed and institutions have already completed all reporting for that period,
 - ISAC will ask institutions to **comply with the newly adopted rules on a prospective basis only, beginning after October 31 for any student that has not yet completed the verification process** and no earlier than Term 2 of the 2025–26 award year for current students.
 - **Both IRS form W-2 and IRS Form 1099-Miscellaneous Income Statements continue to be listed as acceptable documentation of residency under rule 2700.50(e)(4).**
 - Only "a valid State of Illinois tax return or federal tax transcript" was removed from the list.
 - The rule also states: "Data from one or more of the documents listed in this subsection (e)(4) may provide proof that an applicant (or parent) is an Illinois resident, as defined in Section 2700.20. The institution may choose to request documents that are in addition to, or instead of, those listed. For an independent student applicant, the dates recorded on the documents must indicate the applicant has resided in Illinois for the relevant 12 continuous, full months."

MAP Payment Processing

- The Payment Request Deadline date for Fall term was **December 5, 2025**.
- Payment Processing for Spring term will begin **January 5, 2026**.
 - The MAP Payment Claim Deadline date is **TBD**.
 - Payment requests may be submitted through the MAP system in GAP Access or via the File Transfer Protocol process.
 - Payment requests are processed on a nightly basis and results are provided the next business day.
- August 21 e-Message: isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0821-2.html

Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program

- The Teachers of Illinois program is a new scholarship program.
- ISAC has begun developing the application.
 - The program is expected to open for applications in **December**.
- Once the application opens, current MTI applicants will be notified and encouraged to review the eligibility requirements before applying.
 - MTI recipients that were awarded in the previous year will be treated as Renewal Applicants if they are found eligible for the Teachers of Illinois Scholarship.

Teachers of Illinois: Eligibility Part 1

- be a [U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen](#) or meet the [“undocumented student” criteria of the RISE Act](#)
- be a [resident of Illinois](#)
- be a high school graduate or have received a State of Illinois High School Diploma
- have been enrolled in a [public school district in Illinois](#), at any point in kindergarten through grade 12:
 - that had an average of at least 70% of students who were eligible to receive free or reduce-price lunch or;
 - that had a 3-year average teacher vacancy rate at or above the statewide average, excluding public school districts that had zero vacancies or;
 - in which the number of teacher vacancies in the district was at or above the statewide average number of teacher vacancies, excluding public school districts that has zero vacancies

Teachers of Illinois: Eligibility Part 2

- be enrolled or accepted for enrollment on at least a half-time basis at a qualified Illinois institution of higher education, and;
 - be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a course of study, which upon completion, qualifies you as a licensed preschool, elementary, or secondary school teacher; or
 - if you are already licensed to teach, be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a course of study leading to an additional teaching endorsement or a master's degree in an academic field in which you are teaching or plan to teach; or
 - if you are not yet enrolled in an educator preparation program, have received one or more College and Career Pathway Endorsements and commit to enrolling in a course of study leading to teacher licensure, including alternative teacher licensure, to be a preschool, elementary or secondary school teacher
- have earned a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale
- maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by your college
- have submitted a complete and timely application

Teachers of Illinois: Eligibility Part 3

- complete the application process by:
 - submitting a fully-completed Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program application, which includes the Teaching agreement/ Promissory Note and completing the Free Application for Federal Students Aid (FAFSA®) or (if applicable) Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid – in order to receive priority consideration for an award, both complete applications must be received on or before the priority consideration date of January 31, 2026.
 - be certified as meeting eligibility requirements by the college at which you will use the scholarship, and
 - accepting the scholarship (if one is offered)
- sign the application’s Teaching Agreement / Promissory Note promising to fulfill the teaching commitment or repay funds received plus interest
 - the teaching commitment must be fulfilled at an [Illinois school district](#)
 - that has a 3-year average teacher vacancy rate above the state average, or;
 - district where the number of teacher vacancies in the district over the past three years is higher than that of the state

Teachers of Illinois: Eligibility Part 4

- not be in default on any student loan, nor owe a refund on any state or federal grant. If you are in default, you may re-establish your eligibility
- not previously received funds from the Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program for the equivalent of four academic years, which is the programs maximum
- not receive funds from the Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program or the Golden Apples Scholars of Illinois Program during the same term(s) for which you receive funds from the Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program. Although recipients of Teachers of Illinois awards are not eligible to receive tuition assistance through the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program for the same term(s), qualifies students may be eligible to participate with the Golden Apple Foundation.

Teachers of Illinois: Awarding

- Eligible applicants may qualify for an annual award of up to \$7,500 for the regular academic year (fall and spring terms),
 - not to exceed the total cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled.
 - Because of the timing of this year's award, institutions may, in the best interest of students and to assist with administration of the award, either:
 - package the award across the fall and spring terms or;
 - disburse the award as a lump-sum payment in the spring term.
 - Regardless of the disbursement method, the award shall be considered an annual award, and the recipient will still be required to one full year of service obligation.
- ISAC will be drafting Teachers of IL rules for the 26-27 year and will determine at that time if this flexibility will carry forward in subsequent academic years.
- ISAC plans to open both terms for claims at the same time –some time in the new year **TBD**.

Teacher of Illinois Requirement.

- To facilitate on-time completion of each student's education preparation program it was required that schools held an annual information session about the program and that all program recipients enrolled at the institution meet with an academic advisor at least once per academic level.
- This requirement revised to the following in statute:

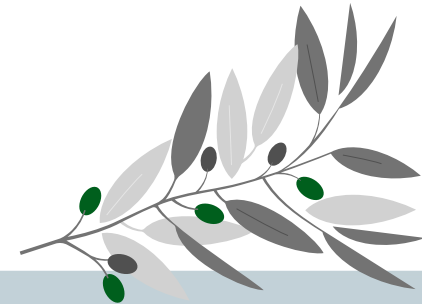
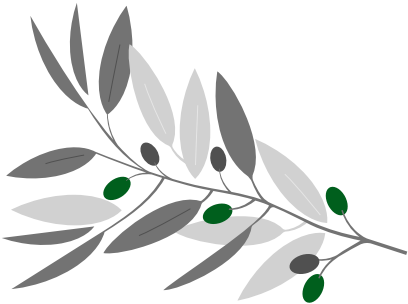
Each qualified Illinois institution of higher learning that receives funds from the Teachers of Illinois scholarship program shall ensure that each scholarship recipient enrolled at the institution meets with an academic advisor at least once per academic year to facilitate on-time completion of the recipient's educator preparation program. Institutions shall also submit eligibility information for qualified students in sufficient time for the Commission to make award announcements.

Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE)

- Colleges have completed the certification process and awarding was completed August 28, 2025.
- Payment opened September 25, 2025.
 - The maximum award amount that may be claimed during the academic year is populated in the “Max Annual Award Amount” field of the ECACE system.
 - 2025-26 maximum annual award is \$7,500
- There are no term award amount limits
 - Colleges must determine the term award amount(s) based on other financial aid the student is receiving.
 - Schools need to indicate if a student is not eligible for a payment on a per-term basis.
- The ECACE Scholarship:
 - is intended to be last payer, after all other aid has been provided.
 - may be used to replace student loans that might otherwise have been part of the student’s aid package.

ECACE Quick Links

- ECACE User Guide:
isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/pdf/ECACE-User-Guide.pdf
- ECACE Program Overview Page:
isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/ECACE-scholarship/



Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program

- Functionality to certify eligibility for 2025-26 SETTW Program is available in the SETTW system.
- If a qualified applicant is eligible for both the SETTW and the MAP grant, the SETTW award must be used first.
- Schools awarded 2025-26 tuition waivers have been sent an email from ISAC
 - We ask that you certify each student's eligibility via the SETTW system within 60 days of the date on which the e-mail is received.
- If subsequent 2025-26 SETTW awards are announced, ISAC will send similar e-mail messages to impacted institutions.
- Further details are provided at the [Tuition Waiver Process](#) page and in the [Tuition Waiver Certification Process User Guide](#).

Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program

- Application processing, eligibility certification and awarding is performed by the Golden Apple Foundation
goldenapple.org/scholars.
- Eligibility data is available in GAP access as of September 29th, 2025.
- First-term payment requests (i.e., claims) are being accepted.
 - Timely requests must be submitted on or before **Wednesday, December 31, 2025**.
 - We encourage claims to be submitted as soon as you can do so.

Nursing Education Scholarships (NES)

- Scholarships have been awarded
- Payment opened September 25, 2025.
- Scholarships were first awarded to renewal applicants who continued to meet all the program's eligibility requirements
 - An applicant is considered a renewal applicant for the program if they received NES funds during the previous academic program
- After all qualified renewal applicants have been awarded, then awards are made to eligible new applicants according to the degree type being sought.
 - NES Award Determination: [isac.org/ isac-gift-assistance-programs/NESP/awarding.html](https://isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/NESP/awarding.html)

Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant

- ISAC is accepting benefit usage data for the 2025-26 ING Grant fall term.
- Timely submission for fall claims:
 - Must be submitted **on or before, December 31, 2025**.
- Reminders:
 - Students must re-apply each year
 - There are no longer term deadline dates by which applications must be submitted each term
 - Applications must be received by ISAC in time for eligibility to be determined
 - The applicant will need to notify the college about their eligibility no later than the last scheduled day of classes for the first-term for which the student wants to receive benefits
 - Members of the Illinois National Guard who have served at least 10 years in the Guard may be eligible to receive up to 180 Units (6 years) of eligibility for the ING Grant.
- Aug 21 e-message: isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0821.html

Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)

- ISAC is accepting benefit usage data for the 2025-26 IVG summer and fall terms.
 - Timely submission:
 - Fall term - on or before **December 31, 2025**
- Reminders:
 - Application can be submitted any time during the academic year.
 - Students do not need to reapply each year - only once to establish eligibility.
 - Applications must be received by ISAC allowing sufficient time to complete processing and for applicant to notify college about their eligibility prior to the last scheduled day of classes in the term for which a grant is requested.
- Aug 21 e-message: isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0821.html

Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program (SWSP)

- The 2025-26 online application is currently available.
- Certification is available in the SWSP system via GAP Access as of September 19, 2025
- For current information, see the Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program section of our website: isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/SWSP/

Grant Programs for Dependents of Police/Fire/Correctional Officers (PFC)

- Beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, the application process is completed online in GAP.
- To receive full-year consideration, an application must have been submitted on or before October 1, 2025.
 - October 1, 2025 – Full Year Consideration
 - March 1, 2026 – Only 2nd Semester (2nd/3rd Quarter) and Summer Consideration
 - June 15, 2026 – Only Summer Term Consideration
- Applications received by ISAC after these deadline dates will be processed only for subsequent terms, with June 15, 2026 as the final date of acceptance for the summer term.
- Screenshots and updates will be provided in our webinar once this program becomes available in GAP.
 - We will update you once the school view is available.

Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship

- The 2025-26 online application is available in the ISAC Student Portal
- The priority application consideration date for full-year and fall-only awards must have been completed by October 1, 2025
 - The date by which an application must be submitted is based on the first term for which the applicant is requesting funds. For the 2025-26 academic year:
 - **October 1, 2025** – 1st term only or full year consideration
 - **March 1, 2026** – 2nd semester (2nd/3rd quarter) only or 2nd semester (2nd/3rd quarter) and summer term consideration
 - **June 15, 2026** – summer term only consideration
- Students may use the 2025-26 application to apply for the fall 2025, spring 2026, and summer 2026 terms.

Grant Program for Exonerees and Their Dependents (GPE)

- The 2025-26 online application is available in the ISAC Student Portal.
- Applications are processed in date-received (i.e., "first come, first served") order.
 - For priority consideration each year, a complete application – including any supporting documentation – must be submitted as soon as possible after it becomes available.
- Funds can be applied only to tuition and mandatory fees and only for two semesters or three quarters in a regular school year.

ISAC Rules: Process

First Notice

The proposed rulemaking process officially begins when a proposed rule is published in the Illinois Register and public comment begins - sometimes JCAR will require the agency to hold a public hearing.

Second Notice

When an agency is ready to submit a rulemaking for JCAR review, it files second notice documents, and the rulemaking is scheduled for a JCAR meeting within the next 45 days.

JCAR Action

During the once monthly meeting, the JCAR commissioners take action on the proposed rules.

Adoption

Once an agency receives a certificate of no objection, or duly responds to an objection within 90 days, it may adopt the rulemaking with any second notice changes to which the agency and JCAR have agreed during the review process.

ISAC Rules: 2024-25 – Adopted

- 2024-25 rules are adopted and awaiting finalization.
 - ISAC's four adopted rules were published in the Illinois Register (Volume 49, Issue 44) on October 31, 2025. The full text is found at :
 - ilsos.gov/content/dam/departments/index/register/volume49/register_volume49_44.pdf
- Summaries of the changes are as follows:
 - **Part 2700: General Provisions** – Changes primarily involve revised definitions and small wording adjustments to clarify existing provisions without altering their intent. Proof of residency no longer includes tax returns or tax documents.
 - **Part 2730: Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant Program** – Clarifies the priority claim dates for submission of payment requests.
 - **Part 2735: Monetary Award Program (MAP)** – Changes primarily involve revised definitions and small wording adjustments to clarify existing provisions without altering their intent.
 - **Part 2751: Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program** – New part. Promulgates the rules for the 2024-25 ECACE program.

ISAC Rules: 2025-26 – Awaiting Approval

- ISAC's seven proposed rules were published in the Illinois Register (Volume 49, Issue 42) on October 17, 2025.
 - This began the 45-day public comment period. The 25-26 Rules will be presented as an agenda item at the December 2025 Commission meeting.
 - The full text of these rules can be found at :
ilsos.gov/content/dam/departments/index/register/volume49/register_volume49_42.pdf
- Summaries of the changes are as follows:
 - **Part 2743: Grant Program for Exonerees** – Updated to add allowances for dependents of exonerees to receive benefits.
 - **Part 2749: Nursing Education Scholarship** – Updating the sections in the Part, removing redundancies and consolidating language for easier readability.
 - **Part 2750: Illinois Graduate and Retain our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Program** – Updates applicant eligibility criteria pertaining to academic performance and clarifying definitions.

ISAC Rules: 2025-26 – Public Comment

- Summaries of the changes cont.:
 - **Part 2752: Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Program** – Updated to add a definition of a human services agency and to clarify the employment eligibility at time of application.
 - **Part 2753: Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program** – Updated to add a definition of behavioral health professional and to update applicant eligibility criteria.
 - **Part 2755: Journalism Student Scholarship Program** – New part.
 - **Part 2776: Workforce Development Through Charitable Loan Repayment Program** - New part.
- ISAC has a new Agency Rules Coordinator, Sarah Dulay. Please submit official comments to:

Sarah Dulay

Agency Rules Coordinator



847-831-6757



sarah.dulay@illinois.gov

- Please note that comments on these rules will be part of the public record.

ISAC Rules: 2026-27 – Proposed Revisions

- ISAC is compiling its agenda for rules items for the 2026-27 academic year and will provide additional details when available. Preliminarily, ISAC anticipates proposing changes to the following rules:
 - **Part 2700:** General Provisions
 - **Part 2730:** Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant Program
 - **Part 2735:** Monetary Award Program (MAP)
 - **Part 2743:** Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship Program
 - **Part 2760:** State Scholar Program
 - **Part 2763:** Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program
 - **Part 5375:** Public Information, Rulemaking and Organization

Rules Process – Resources

- For updates on rules, see our e-messages:
 - isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/index.html
 - To sign up for e-messaging: isac.org/emessaging/
- [JCAR Home](#)
- [Illinois Register](#)
- [Administrative Code and Codification Indexes](#)
- [December 11, 2025, e-message](#)

2026-27 Award Year Fiscal Year (FY) 2027

2026-27 MAP Start-Up Formula

Start-Up Formula

- On September 18, 2025, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission approved the 2026-27 (FY27) MAP start-up formula, which follows the FY26 recompute formula.
- Following the FY26 recompute formula, the following is being used in the start-up formula for 2026-27 MAP grants:
 - **2021-22 reported tuition and fees;**
 - **the 2021-22 Pell Grant Payment Schedule;**
 - **a \$5,200 living allowance;** and,
 - **an \$8,400 maximum award (with an effective maximum of \$8,064 after the 4% reduction).**
- More information – including the 2026-27 Start-up Hand Calculation Forms and information about related file layout specifications – will be posted at this website as it becomes available.

Alternative Application

- The 2026-27 Alternative Application is available as of October 1, 2025.

Federal Loans: Borrowing Limits

For periods of enrollment beginning on/after July 1, 2026

| Borrower Type: | Undergraduate sub/unsub (no change) | Graduate unsub | Professional unsub | Parent PLUS |
|---|--|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Annual | \$5,500-\$12,500 | \$20,500 | \$50,000 | \$20,000 |
| Aggregate | \$31,000-\$57,500 | \$100,000 | \$200,000 (combined GP/not including UG) | \$65,000* |
| Lifetime Limit (All levels; PLUS excluded) | \$257,500* | | | N/A |

*without regard to any amounts repaid, forgiven, canceled, or otherwise discharged.

Interim Exceptions

New Loan Rules DO NOT apply:

- For students who were enrolled in a program of study as of June 30, 2026
 - And a Direct Loan was made (disbursed) for that program of study prior to July 1, 2026
- During a student's expected time to credential
 - Maximum of 3 years
- For Parent PLUS legacy eligibility only:
 - A student who changes majors within the same degree or certificate will be considered to be enrolled in the same program of study.

Federal Loan Updates: Quick Links

- studentaid.gov/announcements-events/big-updates
- nasfaa.org/ob3 (Membership required)

Important Dates & Contact Information

Upcoming Training Opportunities

March 4th – 6th, 2026

**2026 FEDERAL STUDENT AID
TRAINING CONFERENCE FOR
FINANCIAL AID PROFESSIONALS**
March 4-6, 2026, in Washington, D.C.!

U.S. Department of Education will host the 2026 FSA Training Conference for financial aid professionals at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C.

For more information see: fsapartners.ed.gov

March 9th – 11th, 2026



ILASFAA will be hosting their annual conference at the Westin located in Lombard, IL. This year's theme is "Navigating the Upside Down."

For more information see: ilasfaa.org

Registration for both events will be available soon!
Please check their respective websites for updates.



ISAC Calendar

Webinars - Monthly Program & Operational Update

January

28th

@ 2 p.m.

February

25th

@ 2 p.m.


March

25th

@ 2 p.m.

ISAC's Student Engagement & Support Services

For inquiries from students, parents, and the general public:

 : **800-899-ISAC (4722)**


 : **isac.studentservices@illinois.gov**

Fax : 847-831-8549

Spanish-speaking counselors are available
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CT

ISAC's Partner Services Department

Provides program information, policy guidance, training and support to colleges, high schools and other ISAC partners

 : 866-247-2172

 : isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

Fax : 847-831-8549

Partner Services Team

Hannah Castellanos Hannah.Castellanos@illinois.gov

Sarah Dulay Sarah.Dulay@illinois.gov

Hayle Mickelson Hayle.Mickelson@illinois.gov

Daniela Rios Daniela.Rios@illinois.gov

Sherry Schonauer Sherry.Schonauer@illinois.gov

Questions?





Thank you for attending today!