

ISAC Operational Update and Program News

July 29, 2026



Agenda



2025-2026 Award Year Update



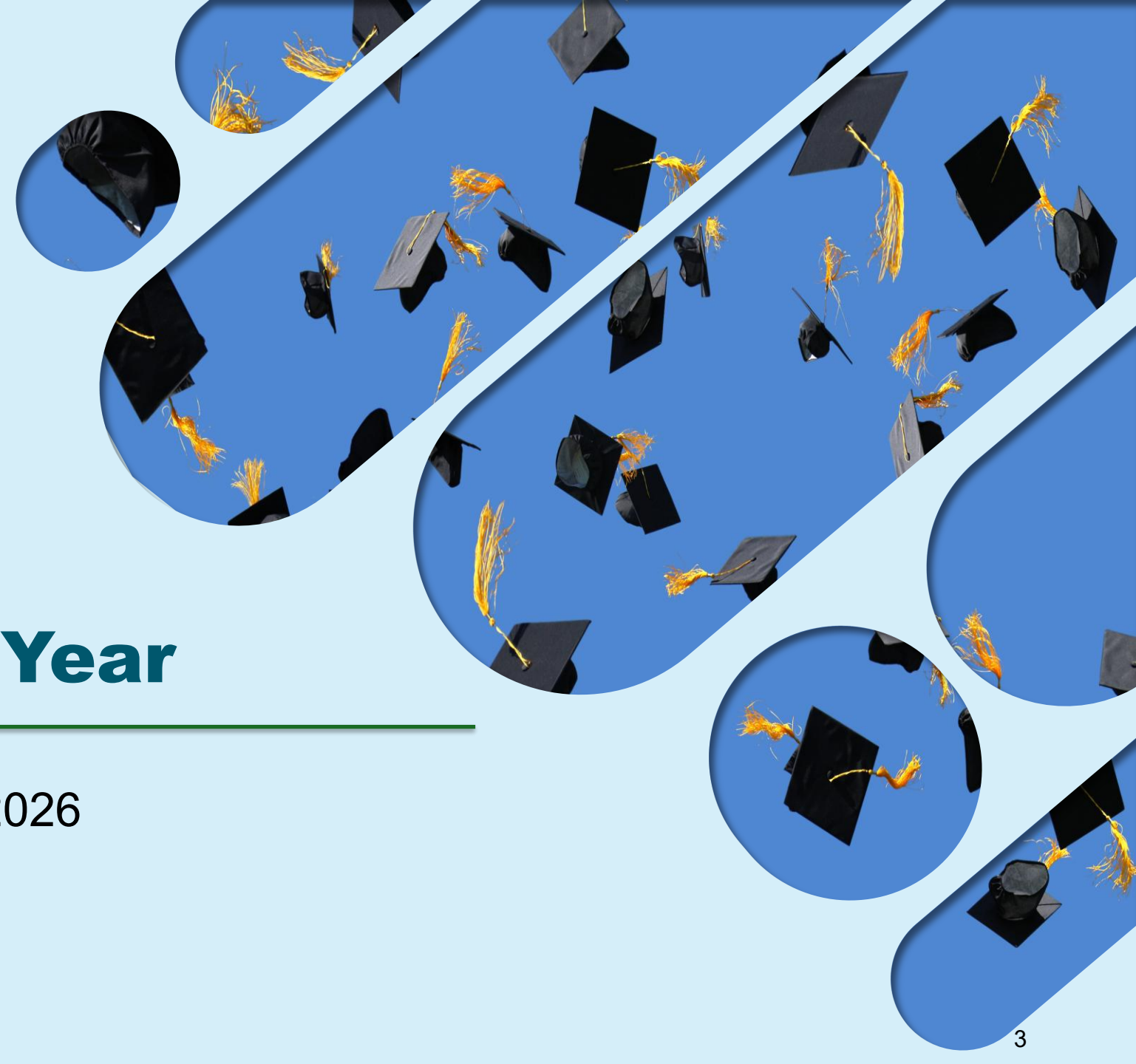
2026-2027 Award Year Update



Important Dates & Contact Information



Questions

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide features a large, stylized number '3' in a light blue color. Inside the loops of the '3' are various black graduation caps with gold tassels, set against a solid blue background. The overall design is modern and celebratory.

2025-2026 Award Year

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

Year-End Close Out – Data Reconciliation

Follow the [Payment Offset and Reconciliation Process](#) – only adjustments and data reconciliation activities are currently accepted for 2025-26 programs.

Adjustments to cancel or reduce previously-submitted claims for these programs will continue to be accepted for all terms through (and including) **July 31, 2026**:

- Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (**ECACE**) Scholarship Program
- Golden Apple (**GA**) Scholars of Illinois Program
- Grant Program for Dependents of Police, Fire, or Correctional Officers (**PFC**)
- Monetary Award Program (**MAP**)
- Nursing Education Scholarships (**NES**)
- Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program
- Teachers of Illinois (**TI**) Scholarship Program

August 1, 2026 - Data for these programs will be **available in historical view only****.

Year-End Close Out – ING & IVG Benefit Usage

- The ING and IVG systems will continue to accept 2025-26 benefit usage data for all terms through (including) **Thursday, July 31, 2026**.
 - Even though ISAC may not be able to fully reimburse institutions for 2025-26 ING Grant awards, *reporting of enrollment hours must still take place as soon as possible* so that benefit usage (i.e., eligibility units) can be accurately assessed to students' accounts.
- **August 1, 2026 - Data for these programs will be available in historical view only**.**

Reconciliation – Payment Processing Adjustments

- After submitting your payment requests and the requests have processed, ensure that results are as expected.
 - Check your Payment Results/exceptions report under the **Reports** tab.
- If a **student's situation has changed, do an adjustment.**
- If an **error was made in the initial request, submit a correction.**
 - An adjustment or correction is simply a subsequent payment request.
 - Select the appropriate Request on the **Student Detail: Payments** screen:
 - **Payment** – to request a payment.
 - **Cancel** – to cancel a previously requested award.
 - **Ineligible** – to be selected for students who are ineligible.
 - **Delete** – to remove the payment request before submitting.
- Always request what the student is eligible for – for the term.
 - ISAC does the math (calculates the difference between 1st and 2nd requests)
- Dollars are offset against future payment, so **no money is returned until the end of the processing cycle.**

Reconciliation Reminders

- After receiving funds for a term, colleges are required to reconcile the payment for accuracy.
 - Award amounts may only be applied to the students for whom ISAC made payment.
- Award payments made in the name of one recipient cannot be applied to another recipient at the same school.
 - A cancellation/adjustment of the payment for the recipient must be submitted to ISAC, and a new payment request must be processed for the proper recipient.
- Cancellations of prior payments will be deducted from any future payments until the end of the academic year.

Continue Reconciling Data for Programs

- Follow the [Payment Offset and Reconciliation Process](#) – only adjustments and data reconciliation activities are currently accepted for 2025-26 programs.
- After ISAC determines that all payment processing is final, colleges with an outstanding amount owed to ISAC **will receive an email notice indicating the total amount to be returned** for each program.
- Until then, *no funds should be returned to ISAC.*
- As a reminder, reports continue to be available for colleges to access after data has been moved to historical view.
- Refer to the appropriate program's "Payment" area (located in the [ISAC Gift Assistance Programs](#) area) to view information regarding a report for tracking payment vouchers and warrants.

Returning Funds to ISAC

- When it is necessary for schools to return scholarship and grant program funds to ISAC, a [Gift Assistance Refund Check Form](#) should be completed and submitted along with the payment.
 - ISAC will send an **email notice indicating the total amount to be returned** for each program.
 - A [Check Refund Explanation Form](#) may be completed to explain any additional refund information.
- The purpose of the form is to:
 - Provide information about program funds being returned
 - Ensure that refunds are credited to the proper account (both school and/or student), program, and academic year
 - Provide student-level information for funds that are being returned

[illegible]


ISAC
 Illinois Student Assistance Commission

1755 Lake Cook Road
 Deerfield, IL 60015-5209
 866.247.2172
 isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

GIFT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS REFUND CHECK FORM

Please report the dollar amount refunded for each program/year if submitting a single check with funds for multiple programs or academic years.

Mail Refund Checks to:

Illinois Student Assistance Commission
 Attn: Cash Receipts
 1755 Lake Cook Road
 Deerfield, IL 60015-5209
Payable to: Illinois Student Assistance Commission

To ensure refunds are credited to the correct account (both school and/or student) and the appropriate ISAC gift assistance program, please complete the requested information below.

DATE SENT TO ISAC			
SCHOOL NAME			
MAP CODE /ED CODE/IVG CODE			
PROGRAM(S)			
ACADEMIC YEAR(S)			
VOUCHER NUMBER (specific to the above academic year)			
TERM(S)			
REFUND CHECK NUMBER			
CHECK DOLLAR AMOUNT	\$		

REASON FOR REFUND

☐ Returning Amount Due at End of Year: Per ISAC's letter indicating total amount owed.

☐ Current and/or Prior Year Refund:

- *Provide the students' names and Social Security numbers (last4-digits);*
- *Indicate actual credit hours enrolled;*
- *List dollar amount refunded for each term; and*
- *State the institution's reason for the refund.*

☐ External Compliance: ISAC's Finance & Accounting Division will forward a copy of the Final Program Review Report to the appropriate internal department.

☐ Other Refund: Provide Explanation

ISAC #3247 08/25 (ON3247 Web 7/26)

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois

Debit Letter Example

A similar message to the one below will be sent to Financial Aid Directors at schools that have funds that must be returned to ISAC:

Dear Colleague,

As of today's date, our records indicate that your institution has an outstanding amount due to ISAC for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) for the 2025-26 academic year in the amount(s) listed below. **The outstanding amount(s) due to ISAC, with proper documentation, should be returned to ISAC on or before August 19, 2026.**

TOTAL amount due to ISAC - MAP \$3,007.00

Please do not send refund checks to ISAC without providing the appropriate adjustment data. All refund checks must be accompanied by a Gift Assistance Programs Check Return Form, and the specific term(s) and program(s) for each refund must be identified. The check return form can be found at: www.isac.org/faas/processes/documents/Check_Return_Form.pdf.

Please make all checks payable to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The address for checks and the Check Return Form to be sent is:

Illinois Student Assistance Commission

Attn: Cash Receipts

1755 Lake Cook Road

Deerfield, IL 60015-5209

Due on or before
August 19, 2026



August 2026

Due on or before August 19, 2026

MAP CODE: 000

Director of Financial Aid
ABC COLLEGE
123 Street
Lincoln, IL, 62656

Dear Colleague:

As of today's date, our records indicate that your institution has an outstanding amount due to ISAC for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) for the 2025-26 academic year in the amount(s) listed below. **The outstanding amount(s) due to ISAC, with proper documentation, should be returned to ISAC on or before August 19, 2026.**

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Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Attn: Cash Receipts
1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-5209

Questions?

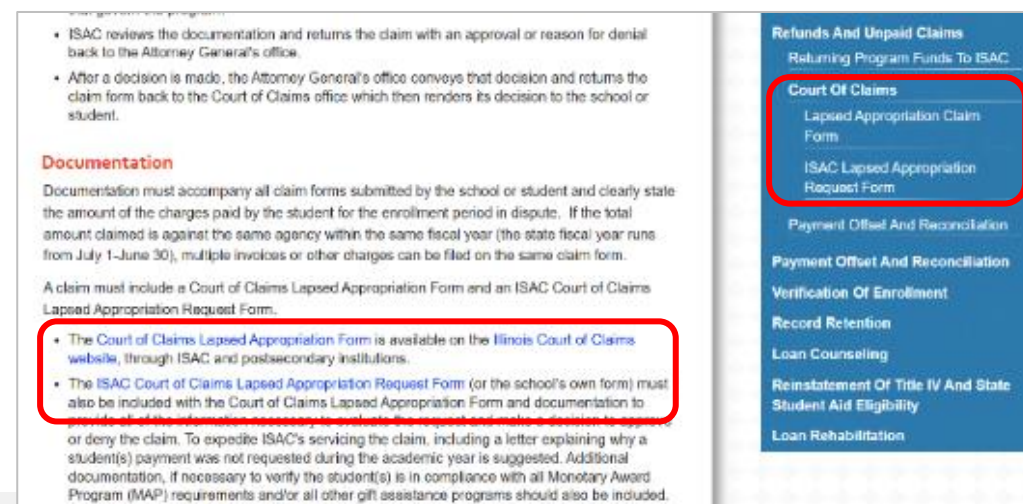
If you have any questions, please contact ISAC's School Services Department by calling 866.247.2172 or by sending an e-mail message to isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov.

School Services Department
Illinois Student Assistance Commission



Court of Claims

- Schools or students can seek recourse for claims that could not be approved in time to be paid during the regular fiscal year or lapse period
 - Generally, the circumstance for submitting a claim through the Court of Claims is due to a delay in payment processing such as an appeal being approved late in the award year.
 - Late claims in programs for which timely claims were prorated will not be approved for payment through the Court of Claims
- Late claims in programs for which timely claims were prorated will not be approved for payment through the Court of Claims
 - From the [Court of Claims](#) section of the Isac.org website, more information on how to complete the court of claims process can be found.
 - Under “Documentation” links to the required documents can be found along with information on how to complete each form





2026-2027 Award Year

Fiscal Year (FY) 2027

2026-27 Applications Available

Program	OPEN?	Priority Deadline for 2026-27
Monetary Award Program (MAP)	Y	ISAC is suspending the announcement of MAP awards for all students whose initial FAFSA® is received by FPS after Thursday, April 23, 2026
Golden Apple (GA)	N	TBD – Apply through the Golden Apple Foundation website . There is an option to be notified when the application opens.
Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW)	N	Was March 1, 2026
Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program	Y	May 31, 2026 (Can still apply late but will only be considered after priority applications have been awarded)
Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program (TISP)	Y	September 18, 2026
Nursing Education Scholarship (NES)	N	May 31, 2026
Illinois National Guard Grant (ING)	Y	When made available each year, applications are submitted on a rolling basis, must apply w/ enough time for ISAC to review application for the term recipient wants benefits used for.
Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)	Y	Same as ING above.
Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship Program (DEWSP)	Y	October 1, 2026 – Full year consideration March 1, 2027 – Spring-term June 15, 2027 – Summer-term
Grant Programs for Dependents of Police-Fire-Correctional Officers (PFC)	Y	October 1, 2026 – Full year consideration March 1, 2027 – Spring-term June 15, 2027 – Summer-term

NES 2026-27 Awarding Amounts (1/2)

- The certificate, diploma, or degree **in nursing** being pursued by the recipient determines the NES maximum award amount and the maximum number of years the award may be received.
- The **2026-27 NES maximum annual award** amount is either \$9,238 or \$18,856.
- Scholarship funds may be used during all terms of study (including summer).
- NES awards will pay a portion of tuition and fee charges, plus – for full-time students only – a living allowance. The scholarship pays for coursework within the nursing curriculum but does *not* pay for pre-requisite coursework.
- The total amount of NES assistance awarded to an eligible applicant in a given academic year, when added to the other financial aid available to the qualified applicant for that year, **cannot exceed the cost of attendance**.

NES 2026-27 Awarding Amounts (2/2)

Certificate, Diploma, or Degree <u>IN NURSING</u> pursued	School Type(s)	# years of assistance	Maximum Annual Award
Certificate in practical nursing	Any	1 year	\$9,238
Associate degree	- Community Colleges - Nursing Schools	2 years	\$9,238
Associate degree	- Two-year Private Colleges - Four-year colleges/universities	2 years	\$18,856
Hospital-based diploma	Community Colleges	3 years	\$9,238
Baccalaureate degree	- Four-year public or private colleges/universities - Nursing schools	4 years	\$18,856
Graduate degree	- Four-year public or private colleges/universities - Nursing schools	5 years	\$18,856
Graduate degree to become a nurse educator	- Four-year public or private colleges/universities - Nursing schools	3 years	\$18,856

NES Certification (1/7)

All Certification records must be completed, regardless of whether the school certifies a student as eligible or ineligible and regardless of whether the student is currently enrolled.

- The only way an applicant can be considered for an award and/or receive a NES notification letter is if the applicant's Certification has been completed by the college in GAP Access.
- Only records that need to be certified display on the Certification List: View screen. Once certified, the applicant status information will be updated on the Student List Eligibility: View screen.

NES Certification (2/7)

To complete a certification record for an applicant:

1. Log in to GAP and select the **NESP** program from the **Programs** drop-down menu.
2. From the **Home** tab, select the academic year for certification from the **Academic Year** drop-down.
3. Navigate to the **Certification List: View** screen.

The screenshot illustrates the navigation process within the GAP ACCESS system. On the left, the 'GAP ACCESS' header is visible, with a navigation bar containing 'Person', 'School', 'Administration', and 'Programs'. The 'Programs' dropdown menu is open, showing 'NESP' as the selected option, highlighted with a red box and labeled with a green box containing the number '1'. A red arrow points from this menu to the right-hand screenshot. The right-hand screenshot shows the 'NESP' page with a navigation bar containing 'Home', 'Student', 'Certification', 'Payment', and 'Reports'. The 'Certification' tab is highlighted with a red box and labeled with a green box containing the number '3'. Below the navigation bar, there is a welcome message and a section titled 'Academic Year' with a dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is open, showing the years '2025-2026', '2026-2027', '2025-2026', and '2024-2025'. The '2025-2026' option is selected, highlighted with a blue background, and labeled with a green box containing the number '2'.

NES Certification (3/7)

- 4. Click on an individual student's name to open the Certification Details screen for that student.
 - a. **Note:** You can view a student's full SSN by clicking the lock icon next to the SSN column.

NESP 20XX-20XX: Certification List: View

[Home](#) [Student](#) [Certification](#) [Reports](#)

List

Filter

Entries displayed 20

#	SSN		Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth
1	XXX-XX-		Last Name	First Name	01/01/2000

NES Certification (4/7)

5. Enter the required data:

a. Eligible:

- Yes – Student meets eligibility requirements. If yes is selected, the sections highlighted in red must be completed. See b through e for details.
- No – Student does not meet the eligibility requirements. If no is selected, section f — Ineligible Reason — must be completed.

b. Program of Study:

- Certificate of Practical Nursing
- Associate Degree in Nursing
- Hospital-based Diploma in Nursing
- Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing
- Graduate Degree in Nursing
- Graduate Degree in Nursing (become Nurse Educator)

NES Certification (5/7)

e. Is the student already credentialed in nursing and pursuing a higher degree:

- **Yes** – If an award recipient completed a certificate, diploma or degree program for which they received scholarship assistance, and they are now pursuing a higher level of education:
 - They will be considered a new applicant, and
 - Their maximum available years of assistance will be based on the maximum for the new degree being sought.
 - For example, a recipient is now pursuing a baccalaureate degree after receiving assistance for an associate degree; the number of years of assistance previously received do not count toward the new maximum.
- **No** – The student has no prior nursing credential.

f. Ineligible Reason:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Defaulted student loan | • Not enrolled at least one-third of full-time hours |
| • New Applicant- GPA at program start not at least 3.0 on 4.0 scale | • Not enrolled in a nursing program of study |
| • Not a US citizen/eligible non-citizen | • Not making satisfactory academic progress |
| • Not an Illinois resident | • Renewal Student -GPA not at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale |

NES Certification (6/7)

6. Click **Save/Submit** to complete the certification for the selected student record.
 - a. The **Save/Submit** button will not be enabled until data has been provided for **ALL required fields** highlighted in red.
 - b. To exit without saving and submitting, click **Close**.

The diagram illustrates the certification process for two eligibility scenarios. On the left is the 'Eligible: Yes' form, and on the right is the 'Eligible: No' form. Both forms have a 'Certification Details' section with the following fields: 'Last Name, First Name', 'Eligible:' (a dropdown menu), 'Program of Study:' (a dropdown menu), 'Anticipated Graduation Date (Month and Year, must be future):' (a text input), 'SAI from most recent valid ISIR transaction:' (a text input), 'Is the student already credentialed in nursing and pursuing a higher degree:' (a dropdown menu), and 'Ineligible Reason:' (a dropdown menu). In the 'Eligible: Yes' form, the 'Eligible:' dropdown is set to 'Yes'. In the 'Eligible: No' form, it is set to 'No'. Red boxes highlight the 'Eligible:', 'Program of Study:', 'Anticipated Graduation Date', 'SAI from most recent valid ISIR transaction', 'Is the student already credentialed...', and 'Ineligible Reason:' fields in both forms. A central box labeled '5. a-f' has arrows pointing to the 'Eligible:' dropdowns in both forms. A box labeled '6' has arrows pointing to the 'Save/Submit' buttons in both forms. The 'Save/Submit' buttons are also highlighted with red boxes.

NES Certification (7/7)

7. Once a certification record has been saved, it will be considered submitted and will no longer appear on the **Certification List: View** screen.
 - a. Certified students can be viewed on the **Student List Eligibility: View screen**, and the Certified Eligible column will be populated with a “Y” or “N” reflecting what was selected during the certification process. The Certified Date field will also populate the date the student was certified.
8. Repeat the steps to complete each student record.
 - a. **All certifications must be completed regardless of whether the school certifies a student as eligible or ineligible and regardless of whether the student is currently enrolled.**



NES Revising Certification Records

Before Awarding

Colleges can revise previously submitted certification records up until the time of awarding from the **Certification List: View** screen. To revise a certification:

1. Use the Filter functionality to view completed certifications from the **Certification List: View** screen.
2. Filter by the student's name and under the “**Certification Status**” option select “**All**” to view all certifications.
3. Select “**List**” to return to the Certification screen.
4. Select the student's name and edit the certification using the steps for completing certification described in the previous slides.

After Awarding

Once the student has been awarded, colleges must contact [Partner Services](#) regarding any changes to certification data.

User Guide

For more information on certification or other NES processes, see the [NES User Guide](#).

Note: A new version of the User Guide will be posted in the next month. The link above will direct users to the most up-to-date version posted.

ECACE Certification (1/5)

- The ECACE program is set up to allow certification for each term to be completed by different schools if necessary.
- Schools will be able to view the school code for each term. If the student selected your school on their application for the Fall term (Term 1), you will be able to certify them for the Fall term.
- If the student selected your school on their application for only the Spring term (Term 2), you will be able to certify them for only the Spring term.
- Schools will only be able to request payment for the term(s) for which you are able to certify eligibility.
- **REMINDER:** All certifications available in the ECACE system must be completed regardless of whether the student is eligible or ineligible and regardless of whether the student is currently enrolled. The only way an applicant can be considered for an award and/or receive an ECACE notification letter is if the applicant's certification has been completed by the college in GAP Access.

ECACE Certification (2/5)

The **Certification List: View** screen includes all applicants for whom ISAC has received a complete ECACE application with your college listed on the application.

To complete a certification record for an applicant:

- 1. Navigate to the **Certification List: View** screen by clicking the Certification tab.
- 2. Click an individual student's name to open a Certification Data screen for that student and complete the required data.

ECACE 20XX-20XX: Certification List: View

Home

Student

Certification

Report

Reports

List

Filter

Entries displayed

20

#	SSN	Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	School Code	Applicant Category	Eligible	Last Paid
1	XXX-XX-	Doe	Jane			Timely New		2025-2026

ECACE Certification (3/5)

3. Eligible – Yes or No

a. If “No” is selected, an ineligible reason must be chosen:

- Defaulted student loan
- Enrolled less than 3 credit hours
- Not a US citizen/eligible non-citizen
- Not enrolled
- Not making satisfactory academic progress
- Not pursuing an early childhood education major
- Student is in a graduate-level program

The screenshot shows the 'Certification Data' form. The 'Eligible:' field has a dropdown menu with options: '--Select--', '--Select--', 'Yes', and 'No'. A red box highlights this dropdown, with a green box labeled '3' next to it. Below the 'Eligible:' field is the 'Ineligible Reason:' field, which has a dropdown menu with a list of reasons: 'Defaulted student loan', 'Enrolled less than 3 credit hours', 'Not a US citizen/eligible non-citizen', 'Not enrolled', 'Not making satisfactory academic progress', 'Not pursuing an early childhood education major', and 'Student is in a graduate-level program'. A red box highlights this list, with a green box labeled '3.a' next to it. The form also includes a checkbox for 'Student was paid an ECACE award in 2023-24', a section for 'If the student is not a renewal applicant for 2023-24 award year, the following information must be provided:', and a dropdown for 'Is the student close to completion of their early childhood education program?'. At the bottom are 'Save/Submit' and 'Close' buttons.

ECACE Certification (4/5)

4. If the student was paid ECACE in the previous academic year, select the checkbox to consider them a renewal applicant.
5. If the student is not a renewal applicant but received ECACE funds in a different past academic year, the bottom box must be completed to indicate if the student is close to completion (defined as 30 credit hours or less remaining until program completion). Select either Yes or No.

Certification Data

Eligible:

--Select--

Ineligible Reason:

The box below is checked for students who were paid an ECACE Scholarship benefit in the 2024-25 award year. If something has changed and that is no longer correct, please uncheck the box.

☐

Student was paid an ECACE award in 2024-25 and is therefore considered a renewal application for 2025-26.

4

If the student is not a renewal applicant for 2025-26, but received ECACE Scholarship funds in the 2023-24 award year, the following information must be provided:

Is the student close to completion of their early childhood education program? Close to completion is defined as 30 credit hours or less remaining until program completion.

--Select--

--Select--

Yes

No

5

Close

ECACE Certification (5/5)

6. Click on the **Save/Submit** button to complete the certification process for that student record.
 - a. **Note:** The **Save/Submit** button will not be enabled until data has been provided for ALL required fields.
7. To exit without saving and submitting, click on the **Close** button.

Data Corrections

If something changes with a student's eligibility prior to the awarding process, corrections can be made to the certification record via GAP Access. If a change needs to be made to a certification record after the awarding process has begun, contact [Partner Services](#). Certified applicants will continue to appear on the **Student List Eligibility: View** screen.

User Guide

For more information on certification or other ECACE processes, see the [ECACE User Guide](#).

GEAR UP – New ISAC Program

- The GEAR UP Scholarship helps eligible students who participated in an Illinois GEAR UP program during high school pay for college at approved Illinois colleges and universities.
- The scholarship can be used to help pay for tuition, fees, books, supplies, required equipment, and other approved educational expenses during the regular academic year.

How to Apply

- There is no separate ISAC application for the GEAR UP Scholarship.
- At the end of the school year, GEAR UP Coordinators submit the information for students who meet the GEAR UP participation requirements to ISAC. ISAC reviews the information to determine scholarship eligibility and will notify eligible students about their scholarship and the next steps for using their award.

GEAR UP – Eligibility Requirements

Students are identified for the GEAR UP Scholarship based on their participation in an Illinois GEAR UP program during high school. To be considered for the scholarship, the student must have participated in your GEAR UP program for your entire senior year of high school or for at least 50% of the program's duration.

To be eligible, the student must also:

- graduate from high school with a diploma or equivalent
- complete the FAFSA®
- be younger than age 22 when you first use GEAR UP Scholarship funds
- be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an undergraduate program at a MAP-approved Illinois college or university.

GEAR UP – Student Welcome Letter Example

Congratulations on your high school graduation! The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is pleased to let you know that your high school GEAR UP Coordinator confirmed you may be eligible for the GEAR UP Scholarship.

The GEAR UP Scholarship can help pay your educational expenses at approved Illinois colleges and universities. You do not need to be enrolled in a specific degree program to receive the scholarship. Your scholarship funds will be available beginning with the Fall 2026 term. Soon, ISAC will send you another letter with more information about the scholarship, including any award details. Learn more about the scholarship at isac.org. Click on “Students & Parents” and find the “During College” section and “Scholarships” page.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - NEXT STEPS

Before the Fall 2026 term begins, we want to make sure we have the correct information for you. Your GEAR UP Coordinator collected information before you graduated. **If you are not sure whether you provided ALL the information below, or if any of your information has changed, please email ISAC at isac.studentservices@illinois.gov with the subject line “GEAR UP Scholarship” and share:**

- Your permanent home address
- Your best contact telephone number
- Your personal email address (not a high school or college email address). Please provide an email address that you check regularly so you can receive important messages from ISAC.
- The college or university you plan to attend Fall 2026 OR let us know if you plan to wait before enrolling in college.

Additionally, if you have not already completed the FAFSA® we encourage you to complete an application as soon as possible.

Finally, to help your college know that you are eligible for the GEAR UP Scholarship, you may provide a copy of this letter to your college financial aid office.

GEAR UP – Payment

- Scholarship amounts vary each year based on available funding and the number of eligible students.
- ISAC will notify eligible students of their scholarship amount.
- The scholarship may only be used during fall and spring terms and is not available for summer terms.

How the Scholarship is Paid

- A student awarded the GEAR UP Scholarship will receive a **lifetime scholarship amount**.
- The student will have up to six years after graduating from high school to use your scholarship.
 - However, they must use their scholarship for the first time before turning 22 years old.

The lifetime scholarship is generally divided into **two annual awards**:

- Most students receive approximately half of their scholarship during their first year of college.
- The remaining amount is available during a second or later year.
- In limited situations, such as completing a one-year academic program, the college's financial aid office may request approval for a recipient to receive the full scholarship during one academic year.

For more information see the [GEAR UP Program Page](#).

Information on how to request payment in GAP will be provided once the program is made available.

FY27 Budget Summary

- Overall, the FY27 funding levels for ISAC-administered programs are very similar to FY26 budget.
- General funds for the **Monetary Award Program (MAP)** are held at the current level, keeping program appropriations at **just under \$721.6 million**.
- Some ISAC programs will experience **decreased funding** in the FY27 budget:
 - The budget reduces to \$5 million (down from \$6 million in FY26) funds to reimburse public universities for a portion of the tuition and fees that have been waived through the **Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)** and **Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant** programs.
 - The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) receives funding to reimburse Illinois community colleges for the costs associated with these same programs; their appropriation is expected to cover community colleges' IVG and ING Grant costs in full.
 - While funding for the **Grant Programs for Dependents of Police, Fire, or Correctional Officers** is down slightly (\$1.1 million, down from \$1.3 million in FY26), **we do not anticipate students being impacted by this reduction**.
 - The **Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Program** is funded at only \$250,000 from general funds, down from \$1.25 million in general funds that the program received for FY26.

Gift Assistance Programs Appropriation Summary FY27

Program	FY27 Appropriation	FY26 Appropriation
AIM HIGH Grant	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000
Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000
ECACE Scholarship	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Golden Apple (GA) Scholars of Illinois	\$10,750,000	\$10,750,000
Grant Programs for Dependents of PFC Officers	\$1,100,000	\$1,300,000
Grant Program for Exonerees and their Dependents	\$150,000	\$150,000
ING Grant & IVG Reimbursement	\$5,000,000	\$6,000,000
Nursing Education Scholarship	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
MAP	\$721,566,200	\$721,566,200
Post-Master of Social Work Scholarship Program and School & Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program (Combined Appropriation)	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Teachers of Illinois (TI) Scholarship Program	\$8,000,000	\$8,000,000 (MTI)

Loan Repayment Programs Appropriation Summary FY27

Program	FY27 Appropriation	FY26 Appropriation
Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program	\$10,000,000	\$7,500,000
Human Services Professional Loan Repayment	\$250,000	\$1,250,000
Illinois Teacher Loan Repayment	\$975,000	\$975,000
Nurse Educator Loan Repayment	\$400,000	\$400,000
Veteran's Home Medical Providers Loan Repayment	\$26,400	\$26,400

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

- A summary of actions that the Illinois General Assembly took during its spring legislative session that may be of interest to the state's financial aid community is available in a State Legislative Update in the E-Library, posted July 2, 2026
 - isac.org/e-library/prs-rls-st-leg/isac-state-legislative-updates/
- For the latest updates and the full text of legislation, visit the General Assembly's website at www.ilga.gov.
- Questions about these updates may be directed to katharine.gricevich@illinois.gov

State Legislative Update

End of Spring 2026 Session July 2, 2026

*Katharine Gricevich
Director of Government Relations
Illinois Student Assistance Commission*

NOTE: Bill statuses are current as of this writing. To review the full text of a bill or check its current status, please visit the General Assembly website at www.ilga.gov.

The Illinois General Assembly (GA) concluded its spring 2026 legislative session not long before sunrise on June 1st.

The session was marked by an unusually asynchronous spring legislative calendar, with representatives and senators rarely in the statehouse at the same time to strategize, negotiate, or coordinate across the two chambers. Meanwhile, the Chicago Bears were in pursuit of property tax certainty and public infrastructure spending support for a new stadium, stakeholders debated potential regulation of [artificial intelligence](#) and data centers, and state legislators attempted to maneuver as best they could in response to federal funding reductions, legal challenges, and regulatory uncertainty.

As the legislative session began in January and budget negotiations got underway for state fiscal year 2027, legislative leaders and the Governor urged rank-and-file members to set modest expectations, rein in new spending, and recognize that the state would not have the capacity in the coming years to backfill in every instance where the federal government has reduced or removed funding.

At least where new scholarships, grants, and loan repayment programs were concerned, legislators seemed to heed those leaders' words of caution: After a few years of rapid growth in the number of ISAC-administered programs, and despite many proposed initiatives this spring, the General Assembly approved only one new scholarship this year (discussed below), and it will not be funded from the state's general funds.

MAP FY27 Recompute Formula Approved

- At its September 18, 2025 meeting, the Commission [approved a start-up formula](#) to enable financial aid administrators to calculate eligibility for applicants planning to attend college in the 2026-27 academic year.
 - To keep FY2027 claims within the appropriation and avoid any mid-year award reductions, the Commission approved carrying over to the 2026-27 MAP start-up formula the same 4 percent reduction factor that was in place for both 2024-25 and 2025-26 MAP awards (see [Agenda Item 4 from the September 18, 2025 Commission meeting](#) for further details).
- By mid-April, application volume and claim projections indicated that, even with the 4 percent reduction, FY2027 award announcements for students who apply after April 23, 2026 must be placed in [suspense](#) status.
- Taking all factors into account, the Commission approved a **recompute formula that is the same as the FY2027 MAP start-up formula with an \$8,400 maximum award (with an effective maximum of \$8,064 after the 4% reduction).**

For more information see the [2026-27 MAP Formula](#) section of ISAC's website.

Illinois Workforce Pell

State Application Available as of July 15

State of Illinois Workforce Pell Application Available

- Institutions that would like their workforce programs to be approved for the Pell Grant must first apply for approval from the State of Illinois.
- The state application is available at the state's [Workforce Pell hub](#)

Webinar: Walk-through of Illinois Workforce Pell Application

- To see the recorded July 21 webinar see: [Illinois Workforce Pell: Final Policy and Application Information](#)
- Presenters demonstrate the application, discuss its requirements, describe the processes for data collection and program approval, and share information on upcoming opportunities for additional technical assistance.

Resources from the Office of Federal Student Aid

- Once approved by a state's governor, the institution will need to submit its application to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA).
- For information about the new Workforce Pell-related features in the E-App, including other training resources, see the following recent electronic announcement from the Department: [\(ANN-26-10\) FSA Partner Connect Training: Managing Workforce Pell Programs](#)

Further Information on Workforce Pell in Illinois is Available

- For additional Illinois-specific Workforce Pell guidance and resources, including a policy manual, FAQs, and a form for submitting comments and questions, please visit the [Illinois Workforce Pell hub](#).

Real-Time FAFSA Fraud Detection & Identity Confirmation

- On April 26, 2026, a real-time identity fraud detection capability was implemented within the FAFSA form.
- This capability screens and assesses risk as students and families complete the form – creating an automated, streamlined process that occurs in real-time.
- This approach will allow legitimate students to proceed through the FAFSA process quickly, while requiring a small portion of applicants to complete additional steps to confirm their identity as part of the online FAFSA submission process.
- The additional identity verification measures will not impact the generation of ISIRs.
- However, if the Department is **unable to confirm an applicant's identity**, the **resulting ISIR will be placed in a rejected status**.
 - ISIRs that are rejected—due to an applicant being unable or unwilling to complete the online identity confirmation process—will include new Comment Codes and text.
 - Most rejected applications are suspected to be fraudulent; it is anticipated only a small number of applications will need additional screening by an institution via in-person verification.

FAQ Identity Confirmation Methods and Standards

Identity Confirmation Methods and Standards

Question 1.1. When student applicants are presented with the identity confirmation process within the FAFSA form, can they use a laptop or desktop with an enabled camera to complete the process?

- A: No. At this time, the student applicant is required to complete the process on a mobile device. However, the applicant can use **any** mobile device available to them at the time they are completing the FAFSA form, such as a parent's mobile phone or a counselor's tablet. The applicant does not need to personally own the mobile device used to complete the process.

Question 1.3. When are students evaluated for fraud within the FAFSA process?

- A: Students are evaluated for fraud upon initial submission of their FAFSA form. Any student who has not been previously evaluated will be evaluated when they submit a new correction online.
- Students filling out a subsequent FAFSA form in a new award year cycle may be evaluated again depending on fraud signals and time since they completed a previous year's form.
- Corrections submitted by financial aid administrators via the FAFSA Partner Portal or via Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) batch correction are not evaluated for fraud.

FAQ Fraud Comment codes, Rejects, and V4/V5

Question 2.1. The Department has indicated that applicants with a fraud-related reject code have a high risk of fraud. Can a school choose not to provide the student with the option to complete identity verification and instead simply decline to process federal aid for the student?

- A: If a student is not enrolled and not admitted for enrollment in a school, then the school is under no obligation to perform identity verification or respond to requests from the potential student. Schools can make decisions about enrollment and offers of admission accordingly.
- However, schools cannot maintain a policy to not process aid for enrolled or admitted students identified as moderate-, high-, or highest-risk on their Institutional Student Information Record.
- If an enrolled or admitted student with a fraud-related reject or comment code contacts your school for resolution, you must work with that student to confirm their identity using one of the in-person or video call options outlined in [Electronic Announcement APP-25-16](#) for V4/V5 identity verification.
- If the student successfully completes the identity confirmation process to your school's satisfaction, you must continue to process their federal student aid.

FAQ FAA Fraud Override and Inter-School Coordination

Question 3.1. Where is the FAA Fraud Override field in the FAFSA Partner Portal?

- A: The FAA Fraud Override field is located in the “FAA Information” section of a transaction in the FAFSA Partner Portal (FPP). A screenshot of the field is available in [Electronic Announcement APP-26-03](#).

Question 3.2. Are we required to accept another school’s fraud override, or can we require the student to verify identity with our institution’s process and standards?

- A: Schools are not required to use another school’s determination. [Electronic Announcement APP-26-03](#) specifically says, “Schools MAY use the identity confirmation performed by another institution if they have no reason to suspect fraud or conflicting information.”
- A school may also choose to do their own identity confirmation. From a processing perspective, when a school puts in a fraud override, a new transaction will be generated for all schools. This new transaction will have a comment code noting that a school has performed a fraud override.

FAQ Special Populations & Scenarios

Question 4.3. Are other contributors, such as parents, subject to identity confirmation?

- A: No. Only the student applicant is subject to identity confirmation.

Question 4.4. If a student applicant is flagged for identity confirmation and does not successfully complete the process, will they be able to invite other contributors? Will those invited contributors be able to complete their section(s) of the form?

- A: Yes. The evaluation for real-time fraud detection occurs at the end of the student's form (using data and inputs from throughout the form), after the student has invited any contributors.

FAFSA Fraud Detection Resources

For general information on the new Real-Time FAFSA Fraud Detection & Identity Confirmation see:

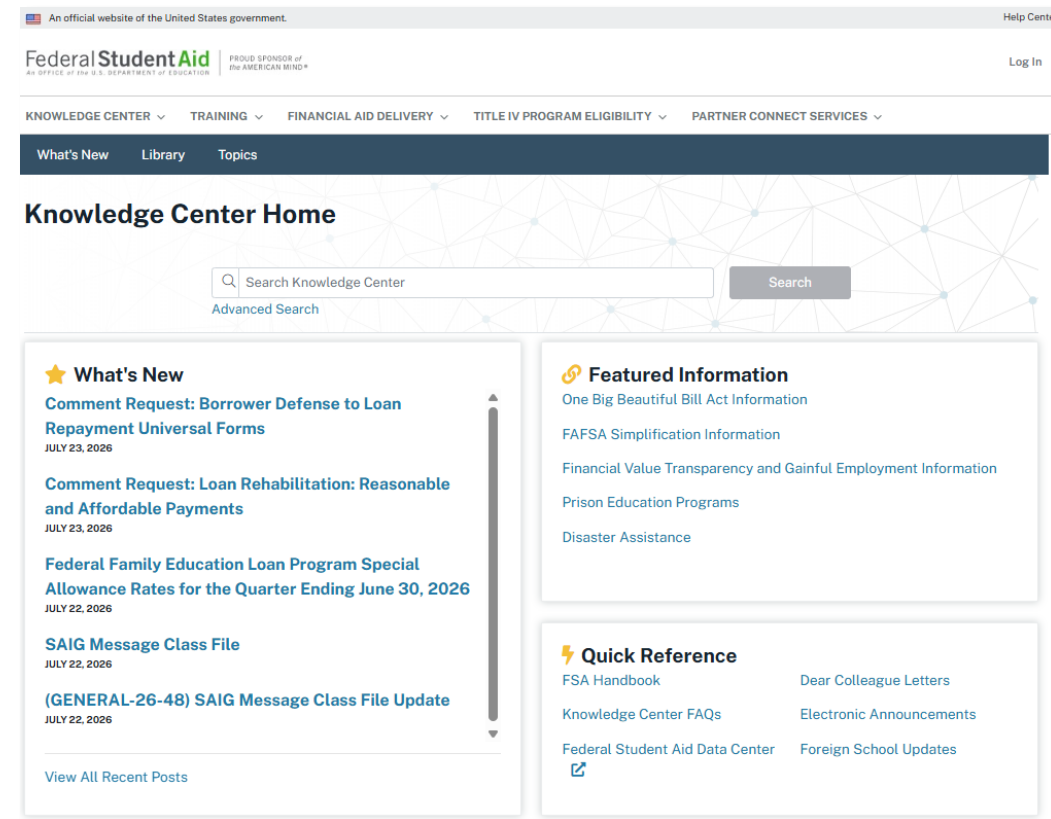
- [\(APP-26-03\) FAFSA Real-Time Fraud Detection](#)

For a full printable FAQ see:

- [\(APP-26-09\) Real-Time FAFSA Fraud Detection and Identity Confirmation - Frequently Asked Questions](#)

More information and updates can be found at:

- [FSA Partners website in the Knowledge Center.](#)



Important Dates & Contact Information



Upcoming Important Dates

July 30

- MAP Advising Data Due

August 1

- GAP Access User Verification Due

Colleges are to [report the following MAP Advising data via the GAP Access portal](#)

- available advising and support programs (for the 2025-26 academic year) and
- course completion data (for the 2024-25 academic year).

To make the process easier for schools, the collection of MAP Advising Data has moved to a biennial process. Schools can anticipate the next [MAP Advising Data Collection](#) process during the 2027-28 academic year.

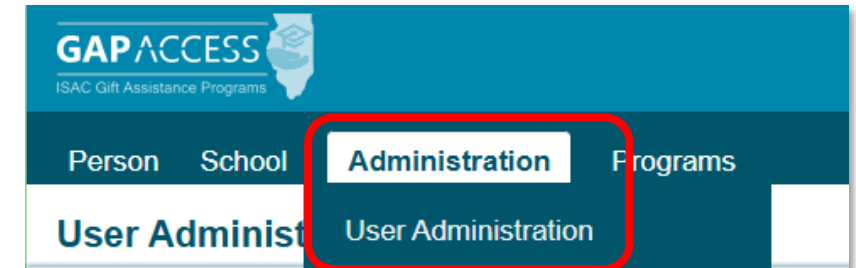
Further details are provided in an [April 21, 2026 "MAP Advising Data Updates" e-Message](#).

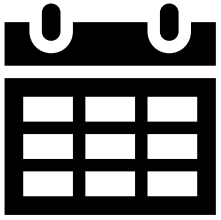
GAP Access User Verification

GAP Access User Verification is now an online process available in GAP Access. After receiving an e-mail from ISAC that the user verification process timeframe is under way, the school's Primary Administrator is responsible for checking, updating and verifying GAP Access users at the school, then submitting a confirmation of the verification online to ISAC.

Primary Administrator will do the following:

1. Log in to GAP Access.
2. Hover over the Administrator tab, then click the User Administrator option.
3. **Make corrections and/or deletions** to the list in GAP Access, as necessary.
4. After any necessary modifications, **review the list** to make sure it is a correct list of users for your school.
5. Once sure the list is correct, **click the School Users Verified checkbox**.
6. **Click Submit** to transmit the verified list of users to ISAC.





Upcoming Monthly Webinars

August

26th

@ 2 p.m.

September

23rd

@ 2 p.m.

October

28th

@ 2 p.m.

ILASFAA Brown Bag OB3 Discussion



When?
August 4
12 pm – 1 pm

The ILASFAA Training and Development Committee will be hosting a Brown Bag Discussion on OB3.

- Rather than a training, this will be an open discussion on the many OB3 related changes and how they affect our processes.
- There will be discussion leaders from Private, Public, and Community Colleges to help kick start the conversations with the questions presented to the group.
- An ILASFAA email will be sent with a link to the meeting and additional details.

ISAC Partner Services – Future Improvements

Coming Soon

Webinars will be recorded and posted online.



User Guides

We will continue to update all program User Guides.

- The goal is to make our User Guides more accessible and easier to reference/ find information.
- If you have questions about a User Guide, find an error, or are seeking clarification, please reach out to [Partner Services](#).

Student Engagement & Support Services

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



800-899-ISAC (4722)



Isac.studentservices@illinois.gov

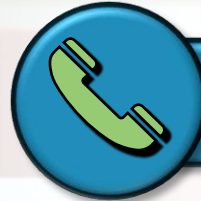
FAX

847-831-8549

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

Partner Services Department

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



866-247-2172



Isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov



847-831-8549

Partner Services Team

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ISAC E-Messaging Sign Up

Our e-Messaging service will keep you informed and up-to-date on the Illinois Student Assistance Commission's programs and services. Our messages share ISAC programmatic and operational information and are not marketing in nature.

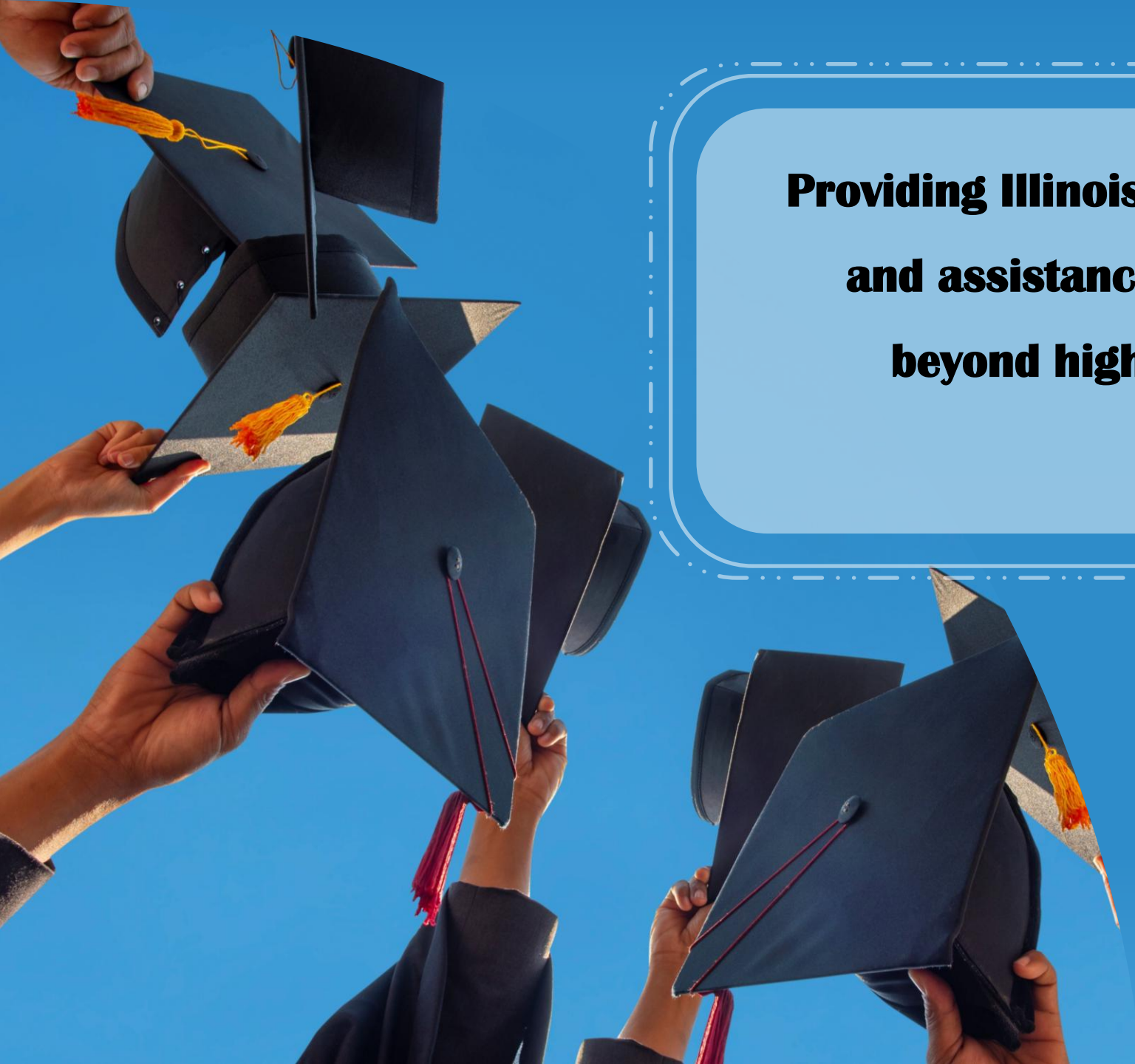
1. Choose the category from the list on the right that best describes you. Click on the link.
2. Fill in your Email, First Name, & Last Name.
3. Select one or more of the available Email Lists
4. Click "**Sign Up!**".

[Student/Parents](#)

[Counselors](#)

[Community Partners](#)

[Financial Aid
Administrators \(FAAs\)](#)



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

