

"[AIM HIGH] provides additional funding to...low-income and middle-class Illinois residents who may have limited access to other funding options."

– Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville

Program Overview

The Aspirational Institutional Match Helping Illinois Grow Higher Education (AIM HIGH) Grant Program, isac.org/aim-high, is a hybrid need/merit-based grant program that helps public universities to attract and retain Illinois students from low- and middle-income families.

- **Institutional Flexibility:** Schools set their own criteria within state guidelines.
- **Renewability & Predictability:** Grants are renewable for up to four years (fewer years for transfers), with clear renewal terms.
- **Matching Requirement:** Universities must match a percentage of state funds with non-loan aid above a past base amount that must be maintained.
 - Each university's share of annual funding is based on its proportion of Illinois university undergraduates in the prior year. See ISAC Data Book for details for each school. isac.org/e-library/research-policy-analysis/data-book/

• Appropriation	\$50 million
• Expended	\$41.1 million
• Matched	\$38.4 million
• Total AIM HIGH Grant Aid to Illinois Undergraduate Students	\$79.5 million

Impact

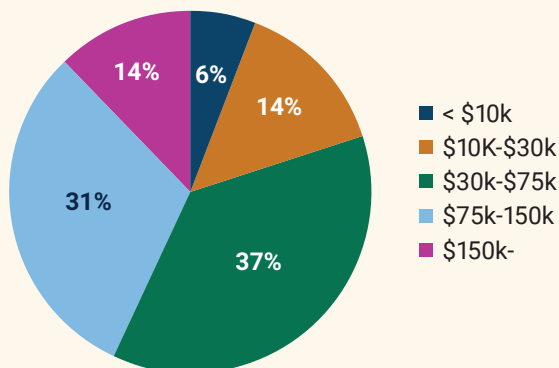
- In their impact statements, three-quarters of public universities mentioned improved **access** for Illinois students who may not be eligible for traditional state or federal need-based aid – a group that often includes students from middle-class families.
- Two-thirds noted the positive impact AIM HIGH has on improving **affordability** to attend an Illinois public university.
- Finally, about half noted a positive impact on their **retention** rates, keeping Illinois residents in Illinois public universities.

- **18,108 AIM HIGH Recipients, representing nearly 14% of all public university certificate- and degree-seeking undergraduates**
- **Average Grant of \$4,391**

"AIM HIGH programs were a critical component in making...education accessible for first-generation and under-represented students especially"

– Eastern Illinois University

Income Level



"AIM HIGH has had a direct impact on students with a higher SAI who would typically not be eligible for any federal or state grant funding... students who would normally receive no grant aid are receiving some assistance in covering the cost of attending."*

– Chicago State University

*The Student Aid Index, or SAI, is used to determine a student's eligibility for federal student financial aid, and it is also used in many state programs as an indicator of financial need. The SAI is calculated based on the information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid. A lower SAI suggests that a student is less able to contribute to the cost of their education.

University Programs

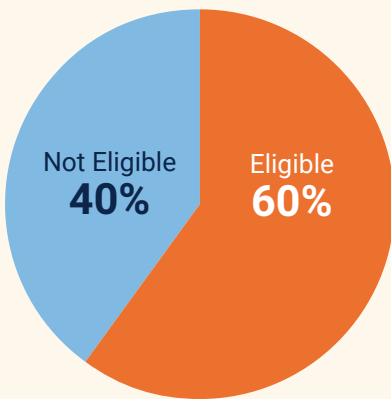
The flexibility of the AIM HIGH program allows schools to design programs to fit into their existing strategies and needs. There are 46 different programs funded by state AIM HIGH funds, institutional funds, or both. The programs target a variety of students and vary based on each university's needs.

- Five universities mention that they have *promise*-like programs for students at or below a specified income level to cover remaining tuition and fees not covered by other federal or state aid.
- Many universities have established programs that are based on merit or have merit-based tiers.
- Over half of the universities have programs with requirements targeting lower-income students.

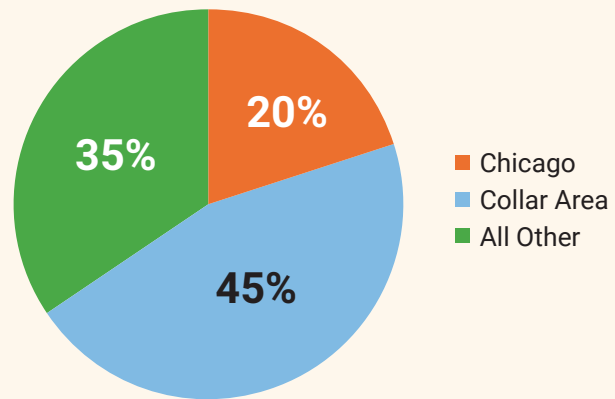
Recipient Demographics

40% of AIM HIGH recipients were not eligible for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant, the state's largest need-based program, including students from middle-class families. Recipients come from across the state.

MAP Eligible

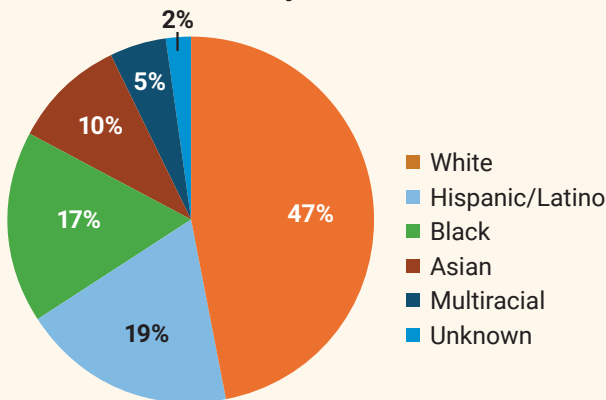


Geographic Location



53% of AIM HIGH recipients were students of color, and recipients were seeking degrees in a diverse range of programs.

Race/Ethnicity



Program of Study

