

FY16 MAP Grant Survey: How are colleges and universities handling MAP during the budget delay?

Background:

The absence of a final state Fiscal Year 2016 (academic year 2015-16) appropriation to fund the Monetary Award Program (MAP) has caused unprecedented uncertainty among affected students and institutions. As a result, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has received questions from students, policy-makers, reporters, and from many institutions regarding how their colleagues around the state are handling this delay. To help ISAC respond to these questions and better describe the impact of the budget delay on students and institutions, financial aid administrators at all 133 MAP-approved schools were asked to complete a voluntary online survey in mid-December 2015. After approximately a week and a half, and one reminder message, 84 schools completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 63 percent. Seventy-one of the 84 schools, or 53 percent of all those surveyed, identified their sector and submitted the entire survey. *Of those 71 schools, 50 percent of public universities responded (6 of 12 surveyed), 58 percent of community colleges responded (28 of 48 surveyed), and 51 percent of private institutions responded (37 of 73 surveyed overall, including 3 of 9 proprietary institutions surveyed). Although 50 percent or more of each sector responded, small survey populations require nearly all participants to respond for valid and representative results. Survey findings should, therefore, be viewed with caution.*

Summary of Survey Findings:

All school respondents:

- Nearly half (49%) of institutions that responded (41 of 84 schools) indicated they *do not* plan to credit MAP grants to student accounts for second term, and 14 percent of respondents indicated they are *undecided* with regard to whether they will credit MAP grants for second term. The remaining 37 percent of respondents *plan to credit* MAP grants to student accounts for the second term.
 - In comparison, 42 percent of respondents (34 of 81 schools) indicated they *did not* credit MAP grants to student accounts for first term, and 58 percent indicated they *credited* MAP grants first term.
- All six of the public university respondents reported they *plan to credit* MAP grants for second term, compared to 21 percent of community college respondents, and 35 percent of private institution respondents. Seventy-five percent of community college respondents and 41 percent of private institution respondents *do not plan* on crediting

MAP grants for second term. Another 24 percent of private institution respondents reported they are *undecided* on what they will do about MAP grants for second term.

School respondents that are planning on crediting MAP grants to student accounts for second term:

- The 37 percent of respondents that indicated they *plan on crediting* MAP grants for second term include 6 community college respondents, all 6 public university respondents, and 13 private institution respondents.
- Of the 37 percent of respondents that indicated they plan on crediting MAP grants for second term (31 of 84 schools), 100 percent reported they *plan on crediting* the students' accounts for the full award.
- Of the 37 percent of respondents that indicated they plan on crediting MAP grants for second term, 68 percent reported they *plan on disbursing* any expected refund, 18 percent indicated they *plan to withhold all or part* of any expected refund, and 14 percent indicated they are *undecided*. Note – financial aid refunds relate to portions of financial aid that are refunded to students to pay other costs of attendance, like books, transportation costs, living costs, etc.
 - All the public university respondents and all the community college respondents that indicated they plan on crediting MAP grants for second term reported they *plan on disbursing* any expected refund. Forty-six percent of private institution respondents *plan to disburse* any expected refund, 31 percent plan to withhold all or part of any expected refund, and 23 percent reported they are *undecided*.
- Of the 37 percent of respondents that indicated they plan on crediting MAP grants for second term, 25 percent reported they *will require* the student to pay any shortfall that occurs if MAP funding is ultimately reduced, 18 percent *will not*, and 57 percent indicated they are *undecided* as to whether they will require students to pay any shortfall.
 - Fifty to 61 percent of respondents from each sector indicated they are *undecided* as to whether they will require a student to pay any shortfall if MAP funding is ultimately reduced. Thirty-three percent of public university respondents and 31 percent of private institution respondents indicated they *will require* students to pay any shortfall in MAP funding, while 50 percent of community college respondents reported they *will not require* students to pay any shortfall.
- Of the 37 percent of respondents that indicated they plan on crediting MAP grants for second term, 39 percent of respondents indicated that if a student does not pay any MAP funding shortfall, resulting in an unpaid balance, the unpaid balance *will prevent* a student from enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating, and another 57 percent are *undecided* how any MAP funding shortfall will affect the student.

- Fifty percent of private institution respondents, 40 percent of public university respondents, and 33 percent of community college respondents indicated that a MAP funding shortfall, resulting in an unpaid balance, *will prevent* a student from enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating at their respective institution. Another 42 percent of private institution respondents, 60 percent of public university respondents, and 67 percent of community college respondents reported they are *undecided* whether an unpaid balance, will prevent a student from enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating.
- Of the 37 percent of respondents that indicated they plan on crediting MAP grants for second term, 89 percent (25 of the 28 respondents) reported they *treated MAP the same way* for the first term.
 - All public university and community college respondents that plan on crediting MAP grants for second term indicated they *treated MAP the same way* for first term. Seventy-seven percent of private institution respondents reported they *treated MAP the same way* for first term, and 23 percent indicated they *did not*.

School respondents that are undecided whether they will credit MAP grants to student accounts for second term:

- The 14 percent of respondents that indicated they are *undecided* as to whether they will credit MAP grants to student accounts for second term include 1 community college respondent and 9 private institution respondents (of those that identified their sector).
- Of the 14 percent of respondents that indicated they are undecided whether they will credit MAP grants for second term (12 of 84 schools), 82 percent reported they are *undecided* whether they will credit the students' accounts for the full award.
- Of the 14 percent of respondents that indicated they are undecided whether they will credit MAP grants for second term, 9 percent reported they *plan on disbursing* any expected refund, 45 percent indicated they *plan to withhold all or part* of any expected refund, and 45 percent indicated they are *undecided*.
- Of the 14 percent of respondents that indicated they are undecided whether they will credit MAP grants for second term, 36 percent reported they *will require* the student to pay any shortfall that occurs if MAP funding is ultimately reduced, and 64 percent indicated they are *undecided* as to whether they will require a student to pay any shortfall.
- Of the 14 percent of respondents that indicated they are undecided as to whether they will credit MAP grants for second term, 36 percent of respondents indicated that if a

student does not pay any MAP funding shortfall, resulting in an unpaid balance, the unpaid balance *will prevent* a student from enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating, and another 55 percent are *undecided* how any MAP funding shortfall will affect the student.

- Of the 14 percent of respondents that indicated they are undecided as to whether they will credit MAP grants for second term, 50 percent reported they *treated MAP the same way* for the first term. Half of the respondents reported they *credited MAP grants* for first term; all of them indicated they *credited the full award*. All of these respondents indicated they *disbursed* any expected refund. If MAP funding is ultimately reduced, 40 percent indicated they *will require* the student to pay the shortfall, and 40 percent indicated they are *undecided* whether they will require the student to pay the shortfall. Fifty percent reported that an unpaid balance resulting from not paying any MAP shortfall *will prevent* enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating at their institution.

School respondents that are not planning on crediting MAP grants to student accounts for second term:

- The 49 percent of respondents that indicated they *do not* plan on crediting MAP grants for second term include 21 community college respondents, 15 private institution respondents, and no public university respondents.
- Of the 49 percent of respondents that indicated they do not plan to credit MAP grants to student accounts for second term, 41 percent reported that this *differs from how they treated MAP grants* for first term and 59 percent reported they also *did not* credit MAP grants for first term. Forty-eight percent of community college respondents and 40 percent of private institution respondents indicated they *will not* credit MAP grants for second term and did something *different* for first term.

School respondents that are not planning on crediting MAP grants to student accounts for second term but did credit MAP grants for first term:

- Of the 49 percent of respondents that indicated they do not plan to credit MAP grants to student accounts for second term that reported they did something different for first term (41% of the 49%), 88 percent reported they *credited* MAP grants to student accounts for first term. This was the case for 100 percent of community college respondents and 67 percent of private institution respondents.
 - Of those respondents that do not plan to credit MAP grants for the second term, but did credit MAP grants for the first term, 75 percent reported they *credited* the full award for first term (80% community college respondents and 67% private institution respondents). Of the remaining 25 percent that indicated they

did not credit the full award, one community college respondent reported they reduced awards by 50 percent and one private institution respondent reported they reduced awards by \$2,360.

- Of those respondents that do not plan to credit MAP grants for the second term, but did credit MAP grants for the first term, 86 percent reported they *plan to disburse* any expected refund (100% community college respondents and 60% private institution respondents). Forty percent of private institution respondents indicated they *plan to either withhold all or part* of any expected refund (20%) or are *undecided* (20%).
- Of those respondents that do not plan to credit MAP grants for the second term, but did credit MAP grants for the first term, 44 percent reported they *will require* students to pay any shortfall that occurs if MAP funding is ultimately reduced, 31 percent *will not*, and 25 percent indicated they are *undecided*. Thirty percent of community college respondents and 66 percent of private institution respondents indicated they *will require* students to pay any shortfall, and 30 percent of community college respondents and 17 percent of private institution respondents reported they are *undecided*.
- Of those respondents that do not plan to credit MAP grants for the second term, but did credit MAP grants for the first term, 64 percent reported that an unpaid balance resulting from not paying any MAP shortfall *will prevent* enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating at their institution, and 27 percent indicated they are *undecided* how they will treat any unpaid balance. Thirty percent of community college respondents and 66 percent of private institution respondents indicated that an unpaid balance resulting from not paying any MAP shortfall *will prevent* enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring, or graduating at their institution, and 20 percent of community college respondents and 17 percent of private institution respondents reported they are *undecided* how they will treat any unpaid balance.

All school respondents:

- Fifty-eight schools, or 69 percent of all respondents, commented about what they have told students about their MAP grants, and how it was communicated to them. At least 50 respondents indicated they have communicated with students (and sometimes parents) regarding the budget issues and lack of a MAP appropriation, and how that impacted awards. The primary method of communication was e-mail, but often schools communicated in numerous ways, including letters, Facebook, etc. Six of the schools indicated they either used ISAC publications explaining the issue and/or sent students to the ISAC website, and 6 schools commented that they had also reached out to legislators and/or suggested that students reach out to legislators regarding the impact of no MAP appropriation. At least 13 respondents included warnings in their communications that the student would be obligated to cover any MAP grant that the

school did not receive. Another 5 respondents commented that they had not yet communicated any issue with students, and 4 respondents indicated in their communication that should the MAP appropriation not come through they would do what they could to help the student.

- Fifteen respondents provided additional information/feedback that they felt was not addressed in the previous questions. Many of the responses related to the technical aspects of how the institution is handling MAP for the first and/or second term. Three of the comments related to the actual impact of not having a MAP appropriation:

Spring is undetermined but if the College does pay, that will be the last term for MAP until the state pays again.

We have had several students stop in our financial aid office to follow-up on the MAP funds being removed for spring semester. Some have requested or increased loan funds to assist with covering tuition or to assist with purchasing books.

My institution is not able to cover the MAP disbursement for either the fall or the spring semester. Therefore, the neediest students are losing state funds that would have helped pay their educational expenses.