



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Lynne Baker

847.831.8024

Lynne.Baker@ISAC.illinois.gov

Illinois College Application Month is Underway at Over 85 High Schools

High School Events Help Students Start and Complete College Applications

DEERFIELD, IL – Completing college applications can seem pretty overwhelming, especially for those students who might be the first in their family to attend college. But there's help available—especially in the month of October, when high schools across Illinois hold special college application workshops and events as part of their participation in [College Application Month](#).

Supported by the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC), the state's College Application Month is part of the nationwide American College Application Campaign® (ACAC) initiative, which seeks to increase the number of students who are applying to college early in their senior year, with a focus on first-generation and low-income students as well as students who may not otherwise apply to college.

"The workshops and college counseling have made a huge difference for me in completing college and scholarship applications," said Basil McClain, a senior at [Manual Academy](#) in Peoria who will be the first in his family to attend college. McClain, who is planning to study kinesiology in college, not only works with the school's college counseling office regularly, but has been chosen as one of the school's "College Ambassadors," to spread the word about Manual's college application week and help other seniors with their applications.

Makenzie Lucas, a senior at [Pekin Community High School](#) who is interested in pursuing an education degree, found the essay workshops at her school extremely helpful. "I've written essays for English classes, but the rules for college essays are really different," said Lucas. "Getting one-on-one help from an experienced counselor is a lot better than trying to figure this out on my own or searching for help online."

During last year's College Application Month, 89 high schools throughout Illinois held more than 270 college application workshops attended by over 6,100 students. Already this year, almost [89 high schools](#) in 77 Illinois cities and towns have scheduled College Application Month activities for their students, with more schools likely to participate before the month's end. The [ISACorps](#)

provides additional support for many schools through supplemental mentoring and workshops on everything from college readiness to financial aid.

In addition to the actual application workshops, there's no shortage of creative activities developed by high school college counselors to get students excited about college, from adorning student lockers with college pennants to student-judged contests for the best faculty-decorated door that represents their college. ISAC offers high schools a [College Application Month Implementation Guide](#), with information and checklists to implement a successful program, as well as tips to encourage student participation.

"My mom told me that she really wished she had this kind of help when she was in high school," said McClain, "so I tell all my friends to take advantage of all the assistance that's available because it really can help you get to college."

For a regularly updated list of Illinois high schools holding College Application Month activities, see the [College Changes Everything](#) website.

About the Illinois Student Assistance Commission

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families--giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state's flagship Monetary Award Program and other scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers—totaling more than \$380 million in academic year 2013-14—ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. www.isac.org



At [Marengo Community High School](#), mini college pennants adorn the lockers of seniors who completed college applications, and students who attend College Application Month events can choose a small college gift.



[Pekin Community High School](#) creates a College History wall each year for College Application Month, with faculty photos and information on the colleges they attended.

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