

Monetary Award Program (MAP) Program Evaluation

FEBRUARY 2011

ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Why MAP is Important

MAP provides grant aid, which is money for college that a student does not have to repay. MAP helps students meet the expense of college while limiting excessive debt and is especially important to low-income students who may be afraid of borrowing large sums of money to pay for school.



MAP Award Data FY2010

	Number of Awards	\$ Awarded (millions)
Public 4-year	42,115	152.7
Public 2-year	52,690	54.3
Private 4-year	35,844	149.6
Private 2-year	1,847	6.6
Hospital	836	3.0
Proprietary	8,048	24.2
Total	141,380	390.4

MAP Recipients Graduate College At Rates Similar to Other Students

Ensuring students have access to the postsecondary education institution of their choice has long been an important goal of student financial aid. Students desiring to participate in higher education should not be denied due to their personal financial condition. It is equally important, however, to focus on whether students receiving taxpayer funded assistance to work toward their educational goal actually complete their studies and receive a recognized credential (degree or certificate) in an appropriate period of time.

ISAC reviewed the six-year graduation rates for MAP recipients who were first-time freshmen at an Illinois public university in 2004. The six-year graduation rate is a measure of students who completed a degree within six years of their initial enrollment. For dependent, first-time, freshman students starting at a public university in 2004, 51 percent had

attained a bachelor's degree at their original school by 2009. Another 9 percent of MAP recipients receive a credential from a school different than the one at which they started. This compares very favorably to the national six-year graduation rate of 55 percent overall for students starting at public institutions in 2001.

MAP recipients beginning their studies at community colleges graduate at rates comparable to other students. Of those who were full-time, first-time, dependent freshmen in 2004, 37 percent had completed some credential by 2009. About 26 percent completed an associate degree or obtained a certificate and about 11 percent had attained a bachelor's degree at a public institution. Nationally, 34 percent of 2003-04 beginning students who first enrolled in a

public two-year institution graduated within six years from any institution.

Given that MAP recipients are more likely to attend institutions with lower overall graduation rates, these graduation rates are especially notable. About 39 percent of non-MAP-eligible students attend schools with the highest graduation rates compared to only 26 percent of the MAP recipients, and only eight percent of the non-MAP-eligible students attended schools with graduation rates below 20 percent while 15 percent of MAP recipients went to those schools. The completion and graduation rates of MAP recipients are clearly on par with the completion and graduation rates of students in general. MAP helps remove the financial barriers for these low-income, at-risk students.

Completion is Essential: MAP is Key



Program Details How to Qualify for MAP

To be eligible for a MAP award an individual must be a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen and be a resident of Illinois. Students must complete a FAFSA, demonstrate financial need, and be enrolled on at least a quarter-time basis in a degree or certificate program at a MAP-approved Illinois institution. Students cannot have received more than 135 MAP paid credit hours, and cannot have received a Bachelor's degree. Due to funding limitations, early application (as soon as possible after Jan 1) is strongly encouraged.



MAP grants can be applied only toward tuition and mandatory fees. The actual dollar amount of the award depends on the calculation of financial need and the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at the school of choice. The amount is determined by the lesser of the eligible amount as determined by an analysis of financial circumstances, the maximum amount which ISAC allows for tuition and fees at the college or university; or, the maximum award of \$4,968.

ISAC's Big Goal:

- 60% of Illinois' adult population will have a formal post-secondary credential by 2025
- Help Illinois increase to at least 45% the post-secondary attainment rate of low-income students

ISAC'S BIG GOAL:

60x25

Of the approximately 141,000 students who received MAP awards in the 2009-10 school year, about 70 percent were from the Chicago and collar area. A little more than 45 percent of MAP recipients are considered minorities. About 60 percent were classified as dependent and 40 percent independent. The parents of dependent students had an average taxable income of about \$31,000, while independent students had an average income of \$17,800. About half of all recipients were considered to have no family resources available to pay for college and about 85 percent were eligible for the federally funded Pell grant, which is limited to the neediest students. The average Pell eligibility for dependent students was about \$3,700. More than 80 percent of all regular undergraduate students

in Illinois receive some form of financial aid (including loans) and about 26 percent of regular undergraduates receive a MAP grant.

Helping the population of needy students attend and complete school is key to Illinois' future economic success. To this end, ISAC has developed the goal of increasing to 60 percent the proportion of adults with a high quality post-secondary credential (certificate, associate's degree or bachelor's degree) by 2025. This goal is in line with goals set by the Lumina and Gates education foundations and Complete College America, a national organization focused solely on supporting states to dramatically improve college completion rates. In a recent report from Georgetown University is an employment forecast estimating that 54% of the jobs in Illinois will require an Associate's Degree or more by 2018, only seven years from now. Currently, only 41 percent

of Illinois residents age 25 – 64 have an associate's degree or higher (Census Data, 2008 Community Survey, reported by Lumina). Most of the difference will have to come from closing the achievement gap between all students and low-income students. Only about a quarter of students in the lowest quartile participate in post-secondary education compared to over 75% with the highest incomes. (data from Postsecondary Opportunity newsletter). Post-secondary credential attainment rate differences are even larger.

To achieve the goal of increasing to 60 percent the proportion of Illinois adults who have a college credential, Illinois must increase to at least 45 percent the post-secondary completion rate of low-income students, more than doubling the existing rate. Need-based grant aid provided by MAP will be essential in reaching these goals, and essential for the future of all Illinois' citizens.



MAP Students Need State Support

A poor economy driving adults back to school coupled with more high school graduates and an increased emphasis by high school counselors on postsecondary education has created unprecedented demand for higher education, resulting in an a corresponding increase in demand for the Monetary Award Program (MAP).

A good measure of interest in higher education is the number of potential students who fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. In FY2006, Illinois received about a half a million (550,021) FAFSAs. For FY2010, Illinois citizens filed 773,930 applications – an increase of nearly 50 percent. Appropriation increases for the program

simply haven't kept pace with demand. As a result, the number of MAP awards made has fallen from 146,853 in FY2006 to 141,380 in FY2010.

In FY2006, ISAC was able to let students know they might be eligible for a MAP award as late as September 1 in the year they applied. For FY2011, this award announcement cut-off date (or suspension date) was April 19.

Earlier and earlier suspension dates are having a big impact on community college students, who are often independent and who often file their FAFSAs later in the year. They are often the lowest income students, with the fewest resources to pay for college, and can be the most in

need of even modest state assistance.

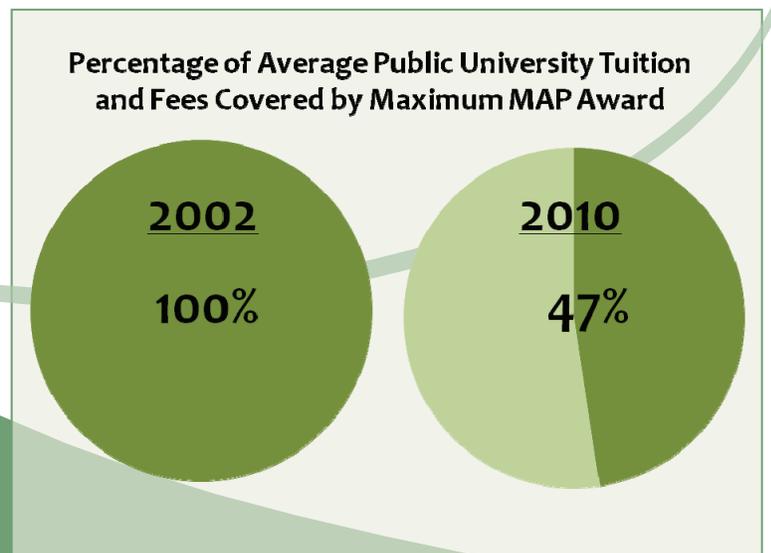
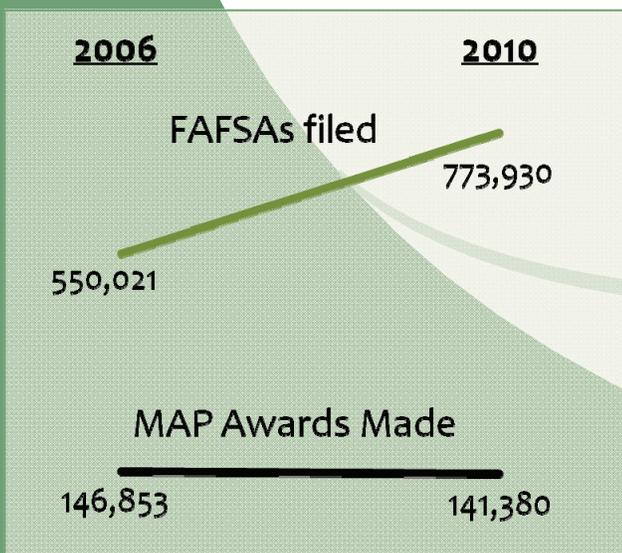
Earlier deadlines due to limited funds also have a regional impact. Students in the Chicago area (and the collar counties especially) tend to have more resources available for college financial planning and are generally more aware of the early deadlines. Students in other regions of Illinois often file for aid later. Since FY2005, the percentage of MAP awards going to dependent students (generally students still being claimed on their parent's taxes) who were not living in Chicago or the collar counties has decreased from 34 percent to 27 percent.

Reducing the size of the MAP award to increase the number of awards made has negative consequences. Smaller awards have less impact on student

behavior and are less able to influence student enrollment decisions. The diminished "purchasing power" of MAP is already evident. In FY2002, the maximum MAP grant covered 100 percent of average tuition and fees at a public university; today it covers less than half. Over this time period, the percentage of very low income students eligible for an award who actually utilized or "claimed" their award has fallen from 74 percent to 69 percent. This drop in "claim rates" for these students suggests they are not enrolling in postsecondary education because they are unable to procure sufficient aid to be able to afford to attend.

MAP should support all students as fairly as possible and give them a chance to receive sufficient State help in reaching their educational goals.

IN FY2011, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS DENIED A MAP AWARD WILL BE GREATER THAN THE NUMBER RECEIVING AN AWARD





Why MAP is Being Evaluated

Public Act 90-488 requires that MAP be evaluated every two years and the findings be reported to the General Assembly. MAP is the State's largest postsecondary student financial assistance program and it is important to highlight the investment Illinois makes in its citizens through MAP as they strive to better themselves and enhance their skills and training.



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Would you like to see more data?

ISAC can create tables, charts, or other information products for the programs it administers, or for higher education issues in general.

- Grants by legislative district
- Grants by school
- Awards by income level
- Awards by race/ethnicity
- Enrollments
- College costs

If there is something you would like to see, please ask!

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ISAC Overview

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) works to ensure that financial considerations do not prevent Illinois students from realizing their postsecondary educational goals. ISAC has evolved into a one-stop financial aid center, offering a comprehensive array of programs and services. Each year, ISAC staff offers assistance to over 500,000 students and other clients who call the agency's various telephone support units, and reaches an additional 150,000 families at college fairs, workshops and other outreach events.

As the primary administrator for student financial aid in Illinois, ISAC awarded more than \$430 million to almost 200,000 students through grants and scholarships in FY2010. ISAC's innovative Capstone Loan Program originated nearly 800 loans in 2010 providing \$3 million to Illinois borrowers trying to reach their educational goals. *College Illinois!*, the State of Illinois' Prepaid Tuition Program administered by ISAC, provided over \$64 million in benefits for students in FY2010 and to date has helped students at more than 600 colleges and universities in Illinois and across the nation.