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OCTOBER IS ILLINOIS COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH! Over 130 High Schools Will Hold Events to Help Students Get to College

CHICAGO –[Illinois College Application Month](#) (ICAM) kicks off in October with events and activities throughout the month to help students and returning adults increase career opportunities and improve earning power by applying to and going to college. From college application and financial aid workshops to college treasure hunts and college gear day, ICAM activities will provide direct assistance to students with the college search and application process.

Supported by the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC), ICAM 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, especially those who might not otherwise consider it.

“I’ve learned that I have to take the initiative, but it’s a big relief to be able to get the help I need to complete all my college applications with time to spare,” said Jessica Mendoza, a senior at [North Boone High School](#) in Poplar Grove who will be the first in her family to attend college. Indeed, getting those college applications in early could improve chances of admission at some schools, says [Grayslake Central High School](#) college counselor Glenn Miller.

Mendoza, who is interested in pursuing international business, has already applied and been accepted to one college on her list. She plans to attend her high school’s upcoming application workshop, which will be staffed by counselors and volunteer business and community leaders, to complete other college applications. Mendoza and her parents will also attend this month’s financial aid workshop presented by a member of the [ISACorps](#)--recent college graduates who provide free assistance to students and parents across the state to help them through the college search, application and financial aid process.

Nico Buccieri, a senior at Grayslake Central High School who is also interested in a business degree, says tuition cost and potential financial aid are certainly factors he has considered in applying to colleges. “You definitely want to consider what is realistic so you don’t have to take out too many loans.”

Still, college counselors like Amy Velez of North Boone High School say it’s important for students to consider applying to a variety of schools that meet their interests, both “safe” and “reach” schools from an admissions and financial standpoint, and then make informed decisions in the spring after they are admitted and receive their financial aid award letters.

Kathi Paxton, a counselor at [Roanoke-Benson High School](#), agrees. “Our activities are not just about filling out applications, but about getting our students excited about the array of career opportunities

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and related college programs available to them—at community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and technical schools.”

During this year’s ICAM events at Roanoke, students can earn points for a cash prize by attending college fairs, playing a bingo game in which they guess which teacher participated in which activity during college, and finishing applications. Senior Dillon Hodel has already started earning points by completing two applications and attending college fairs, but says one of the best parts has been learning about programs in aviation and health sciences that he would never have known about if he hadn’t participated.

During ICAM 2014, ISAC partnered with 98 high schools in 82 Illinois cities to support 299 application workshops attended by over 6,600 students. This year, over 130 [high schools](#) have already signed up to host ICAM workshops, with many more expected to participate before month’s end. In addition, for adult students, parents and others, the ISACorps will hold [free workshops](#) at libraries and various other community locations throughout the state.

High schools interested in participating in ICAM 2015 can visit the [College Changes Everything](#) website to fill out a [registration form](#), and access a [College Implementation Guide](#) and other downloadable tools to make their College Application Month activities a success.

About ISAC

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 2014-15—ISAC can help students make those choices a reality.

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