



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 25, 2016

Contact: Lynne Baker

847.831.8024

Lynne.Baker@isac.illinois.gov

**ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ENCOURAGES FAMILIES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF FREE RESOURCES AND EVENTS DURING MONEY SMART WEEK®**

CHICAGO— Students and families in Illinois are facing significant challenges as the state’s now ten month budget delay has held up funding for higher education, including most funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), the state’s largest need-based grant program for college students. Even with passage of a recent stopgap funding measure, there is still significant uncertainty. And that uncertainty has left many students—particularly low-income college students—wondering how they will pay for college if MAP funding is not fully restored. As students look to find other funding to go—or stay—in school, there’s perhaps no more important time to get money-smart. In addition to providing free [workshops](#) during [Money Smart Week®](#) (April 23-30), the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC) offers free [financial literacy resources and tools](#) to help students and families learn how to manage their personal finances, and make informed financial choices about colleges, student loans and more.

“Over the last ten months we have heard about students having to make very difficult decisions about college—whether they can continue to attend without MAP funding, switch to being part-time students, transfer to another institution or will need to take on student loans,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of ISAC. “Our ISACorps team members, who are available across the state for in-person assistance, as well as our free online tools, can help provide students and families with the information they need to help them make these critical decisions.”

For Financial Literacy Month (April) and Money Smart Week, ISAC has aggregated some of its most popular free financial literacy tools and resources on the [Financial Literacy page](#) of its newly redesigned [ISAC Student Portal](#):

- Learn about everything from credit cards to budgeting to making smart choices about student loans with the tools available through ISAC’s partner, SALT™ Money. SALT also offers a Repayment Navigator tool to track student loans and compare repayment plans.
- As financial aid award letters start to arrive from colleges this month, use ISAC’s online tool to compare them.
- Play the online FinAid game to see how much you know about financial aid.

- Sign up for ISAC College Q&A, a free text messaging service that allows you to text questions about the college-going and/or financial aid process, and get answers from ISAC counselors sent directly to your phone.
- Search for an ISACorps member or a free workshop to get in-person assistance with the college-going and financial aid process.

In addition, students can go from learning about money to making it by checking out more than 3000 job listings on the Student Portal's new [Summer Position/Internship Job Board](#), which is updated daily.

For more information on Money Smart Week events and resources on just about every aspect of personal finances, visit [www.moneysmartweek.org](http://www.moneysmartweek.org). Visit the ISAC Student Portal Financial literacy page at [www.isac.org/studentportal-FinancialLiteracy](http://www.isac.org/studentportal-FinancialLiteracy) for free tools and resources and to find your local ISACorps member.

#### 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 scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. [www.isac.org](http://www.isac.org)

###