

# ISAC FAST FACTS

LOOKING FOR **INFORMATION, DATA, OR AN EXPERT SOURCE?**  
HERE ARE JUST SOME OF **THE TOPICS ISAC CAN COVER:**



**THE MONETARY AWARD PROGRAM**  
including budget, award information, application demographics, institution statistics, and process



**STATISTICS**  
program information and appropriation history on all ISAC administered grant and scholarship programs



**COLLEGE TUITION**  
rates for Illinois universities and colleges



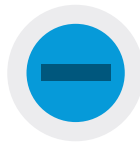
**COLLEGE ACCESS**  
particularly for first generation and low income students



**COLLEGE & CAREER**  
exploration and planning



**MANAGING**  
college costs



**MINIMIZING**  
student loan debt



**APPLYING**  
for financial aid



**FAFSA**  
completion efforts in Illinois



**STUDENT LOAN**  
repayment options

CALL US FOR **DATA, TIPS AND INSIGHT** IF YOU ARE COVERING:

**College Changes Everything® Month**

October

**Money Smart Week**

April

**National College Decision Day**

May 1st

## ABOUT ISAC

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission is a state agency with a mission to help make college accessible and affordable for Illinois students. Unaffiliated with any school or sector, ISAC provides objective and comprehensive information to help students and families make informed choices about postsecondary education. Then, through the Monetary Award Program and other scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Since 1957, ISAC has assisted Illinois families through more than 4.9 million awards, totaling nearly \$10 billion in grants, scholarships and non-loan aid.

In the decade since ISAC launched its ISACorps outreach program, the ISACorps have held more than 37,000 college and financial aid outreach events, interacted with more than one million students and parents, and provided one-on-one assistance to more than 55,000 students.

# MORE ABOUT ISAC

## GOVERNANCE

A ten-member Commission, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Illinois Senate, provides oversight for the agency.

Commissioners serve staggered six-year terms without pay, typically meeting four times annually to review and approve agency activities as well as provide important perspective, insight and direction for the agency. The Commission hires the Executive Director, who is responsible for leading the agency's execution of its mission to help make college more accessible and affordable for Illinois students.

## STAFF

Led by Executive Director Eric Zarnikow, the agency employs approximately 270 staff all over the state (including ISACorps members and temporary employees), who administer a variety of state grant and scholarship programs; offer guidance and support for students and parents through ISAC's Call Center, Student Services, and College Access and Outreach divisions; provide research and data on state higher education programs and higher education issues; help train financial aid administrators and guidance counselors; and provide student loan servicing, default aversion and collection and rehabilitation as part of the wind-down of a federal program.

A team of recent college graduates working throughout the state make up the ISACorps, who work as near peer mentors and assist students and families with the college-going and financial aid processes. The ISACorps also help staff the Illinois GEAR UP Program in 19 middle schools and high schools across the state pursuant to a federal seven-year grant administered by ISAC. The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs grant is a federal discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

As a result of budgetary constraints and subsequent reductions in force, ISAC's regular staff has been reduced by more than 60% since FY 2007. The ISACorps were added in FY 2009, paid entirely through a federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) until FY 2014. Since FY 2015, the ISACorps has been funded through a combination of federal loan proceeds and modest state support. The ISACorps has decreased to about two-thirds of the size it was in FY 2014, but it continues to serve students throughout the state.

## PRIMARY AGENCY FUNCTIONS

**Administration of the Monetary Award Program (MAP)**, the state's largest need-based grant program, and other state and federal grant and scholarship programs for college

**College access and outreach programs and services**, including one-on-one assistance, tailored to first generation college students, but available to all

**Call Centers and a free text messaging service** respond to questions about college and financial aid, student loans and repayment

**Professional development** for counselors, teachers and financial aid advisors

**Research** on college access and affordability

**College Illinois!** 529 prepaid tuition program (enrollment currently on hold)

**Student loan servicing, default aversion, collection and rehabilitation** (part of the wind-down of the Federal Family Education Loan Program)

**State and federal program compliance evaluations** for colleges and universities