



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ISAC Participates in Virtual Money Smart Week® to Help Students and Families  
Get Money Smart, April 10-17, 2021**

CHICAGO –The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is participating in the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago’s annual Money Smart Week® (virtual this year) from April 10-17, 2021 by highlighting opportunities for financial education, providing free resources and tools to help students and families better manage finances, and encouraging students to complete a financial aid application.

“Helping to ensure that students and families have access to tools and resources that can help them make more informed financial decisions is particularly important this year, as many are facing both personal and financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said ISAC Executive Director Eric Zarnikow.

“Most students will be eligible for some form of financial aid, so if you are a high school senior, the first step to making an informed financial decision about your future educational path is to complete a financial aid application so you know what kind of financial aid you may be eligible to receive at the schools you may be interested in attending,” said Zarnikow. “Knowledge is power, and you may be surprised to find that education after high school, whether a two- or four-year degree, certificate, or vocational program, may be more affordable than you think.”

ISAC can help make it relatively fast and easy for students to complete a 2021-22 financial aid application through its free workshops or one-on-one assistance. Most students will complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#), or FAFSA®; eligible students who do not qualify for federal student aid can apply for state and/or school-funded assistance through the [Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid](#).

ISAC encourages students and families to check out the following free workshops, tools and resources to help them make money smart choices:

- **Participate in a Free Virtual Money Smart Week® event!**
  - **Saturday, April 10 – Saturday, April 17, 2021 - Money Smart Week® Webinars** – If you’re ready to get money smart, register for a free Money Smart Week event today to learn how to better manage personal finances. Visit [www.moneysmartweek.org](http://www.moneysmartweek.org).

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- **Tuesday, April 13, 12 – 1:30 pm CST – “Navigating Your Education Financially”** ISAC’s Director of Outreach Operations Abel Montoya joins financial aid administrators from Chicago area colleges and universities at this Chicago City Treasurer’s event, focused on how to secure financial aid for higher education. Learn more and register at <https://www.chicagocitytreasurer.com/moneysmartweek>.
  - **Wednesday, April 14, 6-6:45 pm CST – “FAFSA Follow-Up.”** Join ISACorps member Monica Masini as she discusses what happens after a FAFSA application is completed and the next steps in the financial aid process. Learn more and register by April 13 at [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUpf--trTgpHdLkDzB7\\_ife1a-wG2ZiKBQd](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUpf--trTgpHdLkDzB7_ife1a-wG2ZiKBQd). Space is limited!
  - **Wednesday, April 14, 6-8 pm CST - “ISAC Financial Aid Application Completion Workshop.”** Join us for our free online financial aid workshop on April 14th or attend another workshop later this month. ISAC experts will provide assistance to students wishing to complete the FAFSA or, if eligible, the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid. Bilingual staff will be available. Workshops are free, but registration is required. Learn more about free financial aid application completion events throughout the year and register at [studentportal.isac.org/Events](http://studentportal.isac.org/Events).
- **More Money Smart Resources for all students:**
    - **Contact your local ISACorps member for free virtual one-on-one assistance with college planning and financial aid.** Your local ISACorps member can work with you by phone, video chat, text or email to assist you in college planning, completing your financial aid application, searching for scholarships, comparing financial aid offer letters, and more. Find your ISACorps member at [studentportal.isac.org/isacorps](http://studentportal.isac.org/isacorps).
    - **Find scholarships, compare financial aid award letters, calculate financial aid, and more** by checking out the tools and resources on the [ISAC Student Portal, studentportal.isac.org](http://ISAC Student Portal, studentportal.isac.org).
      - Play the Claim Your Future® game, <https://isac.claimyourfuture.com/>, available through the ISAC Student Portal. An interactive experience for middle school and up, the game encourages exploration of education and training after high school, future careers, and money management.
  - **Money Smart Tools for current college students and student loan borrowers:**
    - **Check out our quick video, [Take 15 to Finish](#)** and learn why taking 15 credits each semester (30 credits a year) can save you money and reduce college costs.
    - **Learn about Federal Student Loan Repayment Plans and current COVID-19 relief for borrowers.** There are a variety of student loan repayment plans that can help you budget and meet your financial goals. For more information, visit <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment/plans>. Find information about COVID-19 Emergency Relief for student loan borrowers at <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>.

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- **Learn How to Identify and Avoid Student Loan Scams.** Don't put your finances or personal information at risk. Check out <https://studentaid.gov/resources/scams> for information about how to avoid a scam. If you think you've already been scammed, report it at [reportfraud.ftc.gov](https://reportfraud.ftc.gov).

Nearly one-third of college students said they have experienced food insecurity since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a [survey report](#) from Chegg.org. If you are a student experiencing food insecurity or know someone who is, check out this list of [Food Pantries for College Students in Illinois](#). In addition, some students are eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You can learn more about SNAP and other resources by calling the [Illinois Hunger Hotline](#) at 1-800-359-2163.

#### About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. 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. Find us at [isac.org](https://isac.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) (@ILStudentAssistance), [Twitter](#) and on Instagram @ISACfinaid.

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