



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES  
2024-25 ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS  
Nearly 16,700 Students from 687 Schools Recognized for their Outstanding Academic  
Performance**

CHICAGO – The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC), the state’s college access and financial aid agency, is pleased to announce the 2024-25\* Illinois State Scholars. These top-performing high school seniors are selected annually based on their ACT or SAT test scores and class rank at the end of their junior year. The students rank in approximately the top ten percent of graduates from Illinois high schools, designating their strong academic standing. Nearly 16,700 talented students from 687 high schools have been selected for this impressive recognition this year.

“On behalf of ISAC, congratulations to all our Illinois State Scholars for their extraordinary academic achievements,” said ISAC Executive Director Eric Zarnikow. “These high school seniors managed through the personal and learning challenges of the pandemic for several years of high school, and their accomplishments reflect their passion and dedication to academic pursuits. We also want to acknowledge and thank families, counselors, educators, mentors, and communities for their encouragement and often invaluable support in helping students along each step of their educational path.”

The Illinois State Scholar designation is a non-monetary award. Each State Scholar will receive a congratulatory letter and a Certificate of Achievement from ISAC. Additionally, awardees can download an official Illinois State Scholar Program badge to display on their online profiles, social media platforms, and share with their high school counselors, colleges, employers, family members and others. In deference to the variability of policies among high schools regarding publishing student information online, ISAC will not post the names of the Illinois State Scholar finalists on its website.

**\*Note that the Illinois State Scholar Program announces honorees based on the year they would begin any postsecondary education, not based on the year they graduate from high school.**

ISAC encourages all high school students to complete the 2024-25 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA®), or for eligible undocumented students, the [Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid](#)

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(Alternative Application) as soon as possible after the applications become available in December 2023. The FAFSA is the application used by most students and families to apply for federal and most state and institutional financial aid for any type of postsecondary education, including career and technical education, certificates, and two- or four-year degree programs. The Alternative Application provides a way for qualifying undocumented students to apply for certain state financial aid, including the Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP), which is the state's largest need-based grant program for college students.

Students and families can get assistance with the higher education planning and financial aid process by attending a free college application, financial aid, financial aid application completion, or related workshop held by ISAC and/or our partners, or by connecting with an ISACorps™ member in their area. The ISACorps are recent college graduates who are trained to serve as near peer mentors to middle and high school students and families in Illinois, helping them navigate the postsecondary planning and financial aid process. Find your local ISACorps member at <https://studentportal.isac.org/isacorps>. For a list of free workshops available in your community, visit <https://studentportal.isac.org/Events>.

Students who will be the first in their family to earn a college degree can join the First Generation Scholars Network to connect with other first generation students and graduates and take advantage of resources specifically for first generation students. Join at <https://studentportal.isac.org/FirstGen>, check out our [video tips for first-gen students](#), and listen to our new podcast, *First Up*, on [Spotify](#) or [Buzzspout](#).

Students can also utilize the [ISAC Student Portal](#) for free tools and resources to search for colleges and scholarships, explore careers, find internships and summer jobs, apply for ISAC financial aid programs, compare financial aid offers, get quick tips about college planning and financial aid from [ISAC College Minute™ videos](#), and more. The [ISAC College Q&A](#) free text messaging service allows students and families to get answers to their college and financial aid questions sent directly via text from ISAC experts. ISAC also offers free assistance through the agency's call center, 800- 899-4722 (ISAC), and its Online Chat service.

#### 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 about 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](#), [X](#), formerly Twitter, [Instagram](#), and on [YouTube](#).

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