YOUR PATH TO PAYING FOR COLLEGE

2027-28 Financial Aid Guide

THE TIMELINE

Mark Your Calendar:

Apply for financial aid **beginning on October 1st** of your senior year of high school.

Apply Every Single Year:

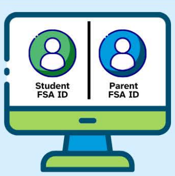
Financial aid is not a one-time event; you must **re-apply annually** to remain eligible for funding throughout your college career.

THE APPLICATION Step 1:

Choose the Right Application:

Most students file the **FAFSA.** Students who are **not** eligible for federal student financial aid may be eligible to use **the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid** to apply for state financial aid programs.

THE APPLICATION Step 2:



Create Your StudentAid.gov Account:

For students completing a FAFSA (most students), both the student and a parent will need **separate accounts** to sign and submit the FAFSA online.

COMPARE YOUR OFFERS

Compare Your Financial Aid Offers:

Once offers are received from each institution, use the financial aid comparison worksheet at **isac.org** to find the best value.

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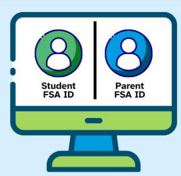

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Know Your Aid: Types of Funding

GIFT AID: Grants and Scholarships

These are the best forms of aid because they typically do not need to be paid back, helping to close the gap between your resources and college costs.

The largest need-based grant in Illinois is the **Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant**, which helps eligible Illinois students pay tuition and fees.

SELF-HELP AID: Loans and Work-Study

Student loans must always be repaid, while work-study and internships allow you to earn money for expenses while in school.

Where Does the Money Come From?

- **Federal Government** (Pell Grants, student loans)
- **State Government** (MAP Grants and other state grants and scholarships)
- **Colleges/Universities** (institutional aid)

GET FREE EXPERT HELP

Connect With the ISACorps™

Access free, one-on-one assistance from near-peer mentors in your community or through virtual appointments at

isac.org/booking

Check out **ISAC College Q&A on isac.org** to sign up for our free text-messaging service!

Contact Your Counseling Office

The financial aid offices at the colleges you are considering are excellent sources of assistance!

ISAC Illinois Student Assistance Commission

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