ISAC Update:
Roads? Where we’re going, we don’t need roads!

Eric Zarnikow
Katharine Gricevich
Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler

Tuesday, March 5, 2024
ISAC Update:
Eric Zarnikow
Executive Director,
Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Agenda

• FAFSA Simplification
• MAP
• Meeting the needs of students, families and communities
• Katharine Gricevich—Legislative Update
• Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler—Operational Update
FAFSA Simplification

• YOU are superheroes (dated theme and so many mixed metaphors on this slide, but still true!)
• ISAC Supports
  • Data gathering and communication
  • Direct support to students and families
  • Partner training
  • FAFSA advertising
• What about the Alternative App?
This too shall pass
MAP: Vastly improved access and affordability

• The last **five** years of funding has been life-altering for students
  • Historic levels of funding: $701 million (FY24); $300 million increase in the last 5 years
  • Average MAP award increased 57%
  • Maximum MAP award increased 73%

• In FY24, meeting goal of *A Thriving Illinois* (higher education strategic plan)
  • Max. MAP grant covers about 60% of avg tuition and fees at community college and about 50% at a public university

• Serving more students: offered a grant to every eligible student that applied in FY22 and FY23.
  • Increased application volume in FY24 required suspense but still almost a year after the application opened; we project we will offer a grant to 95% of eligible students that apply

• Governor's proposed $10 million increase for FY25 would help sustain progress; likely would not be able to increase award size.
Back to the Future: A holistic approach to meeting the needs of students and families

Services and Supports

- Thank you for all you do to support student needs—from food and housing insecurity to mental health services
- Collaborative efforts to support students: example – ECACE: targeted application, enrollment, and retention support
Services and Supports

Back to the Future: A holistic approach to meeting the needs of students and families

• ISAC is building on efforts to support students holistically:
  • MAP award letters share info re SNAP; adding questions to MAP survey to gather info on student needs/barriers and awareness of social benefit programs
  • Training on financial aid and related topics for groups that support students—ECACE navigators, HOUSE liaisons, Undocumented Student Liaisons, CTE Pathway personnel
  • Expanding audience and breadth of training to support development and efficacy of education professionals
  • ISAC College Q&A text messaging service
  • First Generations Scholars Network and First Up Podcast
  • Events and symposia focused on supporting the whole student and communities: CCE Conference 2024: The role of community health in advancing educational equity
  • Embarking on ISAC website redesign
Back to the Future: A holistic approach to meeting the needs of students and communities

Gift assistance and loan repayment programs

- With your help and support, ISAC has implemented 10 new programs over the last few years.
- Newer, smaller programs address community and workforce needs, particularly mental health, e.g.
  - The Post-MSW School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program
  - The Social and Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program, and
  - The Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment program
Thank you for your partnership and support

Onward!
State Legislative Update:
Katharine Gricevich
Director of Government Relations
Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Proposed FY25 Budget
Governor’s Request for FY25

“Budget in Brief” is available at budget.Illinois.gov

Anticipates a return to tighter budgets (but includes some new initiatives)

Includes proposals to increase revenue:
• would raise the cap on corporate deductions for operating losses instead of letting it expire completely (this cap would be eliminated if the law is left unchanged)
• increases the tax rate paid by sports wagering companies
• reduces a credit claimed by retailers for collecting sales tax

Assumes FY25 state general funds revenue of $52.993 billion and spending of $52.697 billion ($296 million surplus)
FY25 Proposed Operating Budget

All Funds: $123.2 Billion

- Government Services: 12.1%
- Education: 16.4%
- Human Services: 17.1%
- Healthcare: 32.0%
- Economic Development: 7.4%
- Public Safety: 5.9%
- Environment and Culture: 0.6%
- Pensions: 8.4%

General Funds: $52.7 Billion

- Human Services: 20.5%
- Education: 20.2%
- Healthcare: 17.5%
- Government Services: 8.6%
- Statutory Transfers: 4.1%
- Higher Education: 4.8%
- Public Safety: 4.7%
- Economic Development: 0.04%
- Environment and Culture: 0.04%
- Pensions: 18.9%
- PreK-12: 16.8%
Highlights: ISAC

**MAP**: $711.6 million (+$10 million)
- Up 77% from the FY19 approp of about $401.3 million.

**ECACE Scholarship**: $5 million
- Has been federally funded, will need state funds

**Human Services Professional Loan Repayment**: $250,000

**Scratch-off lotto proceeds**: up to $2.5 million each for the Illinois DREAM Fund and UNCF Illinois

Requests for other programs are flat at the current year’s levels (AIM HIGH, MTI, Nursing Education, Golden Apple, etc.)
Highlights: Higher Ed

Increase of 2% in general funds for the operating costs of public universities (+$24.6 million) and community colleges (+$6 million)

$450,000 to expand the Common App program for use by community college students transferring to Illinois public universities

$450,000 for an IBHE/ICCB data dashboard to track institutions’ progress toward closing student equity gaps

Level funding of nearly $4.3m for ICCB to reimburse community colleges for waiving tuition and fees under the Illinois Veteran Grant and Illinois National Guard Grant
Legislative Proposals
Changes to Existing Programs

• New metrics for for-profits to stay in MAP (SB 93)
• No for-profits in ISAC-run programs (SB 3397)
• IVG sliding scale for eligibility and transfer to dependents (SB 2667)
• IVG longer window for return to Illinois (HB 4337)
• ECACE Scholarship in state law (HB 5024)
• Grow Your Own Teacher transferred from IBHE to ISAC (HB 5437)
• DCFS waiver changes (SB 3138)
• Tuition waivers for dependents of public university employees w/7 years’ service and for dependent survivors of public university employees (HB 4492)
Eliminating repayment provisions for state grants

• Releasing recipients from repayment obligations for grant/loan programs, or “groans” (HB 5482)
  • New recipients would still pledge to complete work obligations and to provide evidence to ISAC that they’re fulfilling the pledge
  • Existing obligations would be cancelled
  • Affected programs would include Minority Teachers of Illinois, Golden Apple Scholars, Special Education Teacher Tuition Waivers, Optometric Education Scholarship Program, Post-MSW School Social Work Professional Educator License scholarships, the iGROW Tech Scholarship, and the Nursing Education Scholarship
Workforce Programs

• Workforce industry shortage scholarship (SB 102)
• Grants and loan repayment programs for:
  • Manufacturing (SB 3560)
  • Local Journalism (SB 3592)
  • Nurses in prisons (HB 5475)
  • School support personnel (counselors, psychologists, nurses, speech-language pathologists) (HB 5492)
  • Music education (SB 3395)
  • Hospice and Palliative Care workers (SB 3714)
  • Optometrists (SB 3579 and HB 4940)
Pay for Experiential Learning

- Student teaching stipend (SB 3215 and HB 4652)
- Larger Minority Teachers of Illinois grants for student teachers (SB 2040 and SB 2776)
- Extended MAP eligibility for student teachers, with obligation to teach or repay (SB 284)
- Nursing student stipend (SB 3703)
- Paid internships for school social workers (SB 2222)
Other aid policy changes

• RISE Act changes
  • To include students who didn’t live with parents while attending high school in IL (SB 2404 and HB 5568)
  • To include grad students (HB 4725)

• Scholarship Displacement Act (HB 5292)
...and much more

- Uniform Admissions Program
- Set-aside for rural students in law, medical, and nursing schools
- Declarations of student rights, student-athlete rights
- Course material cost transparency
- Taxability of student loan repayment assistance, employer-funded tuition assistance, student loan payments
- Waived application fees for refugees
- Efforts to encourage baccalaureate completion (eliminating application fees for community college transfer students, increasing participation in the Illinois Articulation Initiative, establishing processes for cc campuses to bring in BA providers)
The State Legislative Update is in the ISAC e-Library at isac.org.
Bill text and status are at www.ilga.gov.
I’m at katharine.gricevich@illinois.gov
ISAC Operational Update:
Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler
Managing Director,
Program Services and Compliance
Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Me, trying to explain our 24-25 production and implementation timelines to my boss.
Me, trying to calibrate the new federal tool for downloading ISIRs.
The spirits of my loved ones, trying to save me from myself during Public Comment period.
Our Roadmap

• 2023-24 Program Updates
• 2024-25 Program Updates
• What’s Down the Road …
• Resources for the Journey
• Customer Service When You Need It
2023-24 Monetary Award Program

• **CLAIMS**: Currently accepting Term 2 (Spring) claims
  • Spring term deadline date is **Friday, March 22**
  • *NOTE*: Fall claims and upward adjustments submitted after the fall term claim deadline date are being held as late claims.
  • **STAY TUNED**: Third term and late-start Spring term processing is expected to begin on March 21.

• **SUSPENSE**: Applicants whose 2023-24 FAFSA or Alternative Application were submitted on or after September 23, 2023 remain in suspense status.
Other 2023-24 Program Updates

• Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program
  • In the final year of a 3-year federally funded program
  • Effective March 9, 2024 ISAC will pause 2023-24 application processing
    • REMINDER: Application will remain on website, applicants will receive an unfunded letter
  • March 15, 2024 claims deadline: Please submit all first and second term claims
    • REMINDER: If awarded, a student retains the full scholarship for the full year - Funds not used in one term may be used in a subsequent term
  • We are on track to deliver the program through Summer 2024 term – stay tuned for additional updates.

• Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program
  • Continuing additional rounds of awarding while appropriations remain
    • REMINDER: Be sure to check for dual-awarding situations for students - Students cannot receive assistance from more than one ISAC teacher program (MTI, Golden Apple, SETTW) in an award year
Other 2023-24 Program Updates

• Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship Program
  • Application deadline date for summer term consideration is **June 15, 2024**
    • REMINDER: Application deadline dates for first and second semester have passed

• Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program
  • Priority application consideration date was August 28, 2023, however, the application remains available
    • REMINDER: Complete applications submitted after the priority date will be considered only if available funding remains after all timely complete applicants have been awarded
2024-25 Monetary Award Program

2024-25 MAP Formula – Timeline of FY24 Activities

• **Start-Up Formula** was approved at the **September 2023** Commission Meeting
  • Using 2021-22 reported tuition and fees and 2021-22 Pell tables in the formula
  • Maximum award amount is $8,400
  • EFC is replaced with the SAI
    • **NOTE:** If SAI is negative, it will be set to 0 in the MAP formula
• **Recompute Formula** will be submitted for approval at the **June 2024** Commission Meeting
  • The process of approving the recompute formula is to:
    1. Meet with ILASFAA MAP Formula Committee to discuss recommendations
    2. Present the recompute formula to the Commission
    3. Approved formula and maximum award announced, if applicable

2024-25 MAP APPROPRIATION

• February 21 Governor’s State of the State and Budget Address: a proposed increase of $10M over the FY24 $701M appropriation
• Spring legislative session is scheduled to adjourn near the end of May

2024-25 MAP SUSPENSE

• A suspense date has not been announced
2024-25 Monetary Award Program

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE – E-Library “Electronic Tools”

MAP160-byte file layout specifications

Sample ISAC UUIDs

ISACPLL3YrRh5E8EohuN58wgGndxcXdQPGKM
ISACPwHoPtRKMQxELuxwUCON0grXZKdeJjT6
ISACPXPGkpacsIF8i0R0jPDzjjvzYN6N2wTN

Alternative Application
Student Record School File Layout Specifications

2024–25 Alternative Application Student Record School File Layout Specifications

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Other 2024-25 Program Updates

• Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program
  • Priority application date is March 31, 2024
    • REMINDER: Applicants must submit BOTH (1) an ISAC MTI program application and (2) a 2024-25 FAFSA or Alternative Application to have a complete file for processing

• Due to issues with the 2024-25 FAFSA, allowances will be provided for applicants who cannot submit their FAFSA by March 31
  • NOTE: The FAFSA should be submitted as soon as possible, HOWEVER the student’s MTI application should still be submitted by March 31 to be considered timely.

Program Reminder for Institutions – INFO SESSIONS & ADVISING!

Participating colleges must host an annual information session about MTI for teacher candidates of color and require that each program recipient meet with an academic advisor at least once per academic year.
Other 2024-25 Programs Updates

• Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program
  • This program is not subject to an appropriation – it is a tuition waiver for attendance at public universities in Illinois
  • Application priority date was March 1, 2024
  • Application remains available – apps submitted after March 1 are accepted but considered not timely
    • REMINDER 1: Students are encouraged to apply as long as the application remains available
    • REMINDER 2: Does not require a FAFSA or Alternative Application to complete the application process

• Next steps
  • Processing and award the program’s 250 waivers
  • Students who are awarded will be notified by ISAC by July 1, 2024
Other 2024-25 Program Updates

- **Nursing Education Scholarships (NES) Program**
  - ISAC application is available **March 1 – April 30**
  - **REMINDER:** Final date is a deadline date, not a priority date

- Students must re-apply for the NES program each year

- Again, due to issues with the 2024-25 FAFSA, allowances will be provided for applicants who cannot submit their FAFSA by April 30
  - **NOTE:** The FAFSA should be submitted as soon as possible, HOWEVER the student’s NES application should still be submitted by April 30 to be considered timely.

- **Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Program**
  - Launching for 2024-25, subject to appropriation
Administrative Burden Reduction? Yes.
Greater Flexibilities in ISAC Program Administration

1. MAP Award Adjustments
   • Temporarily suspending the expectation to submit an enrollment hours adjustment for students at 15 hours or above, if their award amount remains unchanged
   • Temporarily suspending the expectation to edit a student’s MAP code if a student changes programs during the term, if their award amount remains unchanged
     • Will also be acceptable to adjust the award amount in the same budget code, and not have to cancel initial claim and submit a new one

2. MAP Advising Data Collection
   • ISAC will delay data collection until late Fall 2024 and will plan to leave it open through the end of the calendar year

More information to follow post-conference!
Administrative Burden Reduction? Yes.
Greater Flexibilities in ISAC Program Review

1. Program Review Suspense – NEW Reviews
   • ISAC will suspend all NEW routine program reviews through June 2024.

2. Program Review Extensions – CURRENT Reviews
   • ISAC will work with the institutions currently undergoing a review to provide extensions for responses, reports or requests for additional documentation.
What’s Down the Road …

- **Enhancements to the GAP Access registration process**
  - Primary Administrators will be able to easily provide access to new Administrators
  - User Guides are being updated
  - **Reminder!** Password resets can be done by the school – please see the prompt under the GAP Access Login Box

**Coming Soon:**
Updated User Guides!

**Reminder:**
Password Resets!
What’s Down the Road …

• **Annual Budget Data Collection Process**
  - Will open in early April
    - SAVE THE DATE: Policies & Procedures Webinar will be offered on **April 9, 2024**
  - Due date to submit data will be **June 1, 2024**
    - **REMINDER 1**: Colleges will continue to report main tuition and fee rates, can report differential rates as needed
    - **REMINDER 2**: If school budgets aren’t final by then, estimated data may be submitted and updated during the summer
    - **REMINDER 3**: Schools cannot begin the MAP payment process until all budget data is provided
Proposed Rule Amendments for 2024-25 Award Year

• **Part 2700 – General Provisions**
  - Delete “Expected Family Contribution” definition
  - Revise “Resident of Illinois” definition to provide a residency override for dependent students negatively impacted by 2024-25 FAFSA changes
  - Add “Student Aid Index” definition
  - Clarify circumstances under which a residency override can be granted and provide verification documentation requirements

• **Part 2749 – Nursing Education Scholarships**
  - Revise several sections to better align the rules with ISAC’s automated processes and provide consistency with other ISAC programs following transfer of the program from IDPH
Proposed Rule Amendments for 2024-25 Award Year

- **Part 2750 – Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Support Program**
  - Clarify that FAFSA is required
  - Add information about awarding methodology
  - Add other awarding guidance
  - Add possible special circumstances that would warrant extension of repayment obligation

- **Part 2753 – Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program**
  - Add other qualifying mental health centers (P.A. 103-0056)
  - Add that 30% of funding shall be reserved for minority applicants (P.A. 103-0056)
  - Update repayment amounts and add additional professions (P.A. 103-0056)
Resources

You may find these resources helpful in answering your questions:

- **Partner Training Page:**
  - [isac.org/e-library/partner-training/index.html](http://isac.org/e-library/partner-training/index.html)

- **Partner e-Messages:**

- **ISAC Gift Assistance Programs:**
  - [isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/index.html](http://isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/index.html)

- **FAA Processes (a how-to section for operational guidance):**
  - [isac.org/faas/processes/index.html](http://isac.org/faas/processes/index.html)

- **2024-25 MAP 160-Byte File Layout:**

- **ISAC Gift Assistance Program Applications:**
  - [isac.org/e-library/applications-forms-brochures.html](http://isac.org/e-library/applications-forms-brochures.html)
Your Partners on the Journey …

Program Services & Compliance (PSC) Team

Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler, Managing Director, Program Services & Compliance

Christy Shields, Director, Program and Product Services
Nicole Kelleher, Manager, Applicant Services
Steve Markese, Manager, Product Delivery Services
Paul Oliver, Manager, Student & Parent Services, Call Center

Kim Eck, Assistant Director, Partner Services
Stephanie Claudio, Training Services Specialist
Daniela Rios, Training Services Specialist
Sherry Schonauer, Training Services Specialist

Jackie Eckley, Assistant Director, Program Communication Services

Darla Puckel, Assistant Director, College Illinois!® Operations

* These staff are here at the conference!
For school inquiries, both colleges and high schools

ISAC’s School Services Department

Phone: 866-247-2172
Fax: 847-831-8549
E-mail: isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CT

If unable to assist you, your inquiry will be forwarded to the appropriate person in PSC.
For inquiries from students, parents, and the public:

ISAC’s Student & Parent Services Department

Phone: **800-899-ISAC (4722)**
Fax: 847-831-8549
E-mail: isac.studentservices@illinois.gov

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CT

Reminder: Spanish-speaking counselors are available!
“The future is what you make it.”
--Doc Brown

Thank you from all of us at ISAC!