ISAC Outreach Services & Initiatives

Tommy Semanic – Professional Development Specialist
Agenda

1. ISAC Website
2. ISAC Services
3. State Initiatives
4. ISAC Student Portal
Students & Parents

Created especially for students of every age who are looking for information about going to college, this area of our website has all your answers. Although it was written with students in mind, parents of college-bound students will find this information helpful, too. Plus, there's a link below for parent-specific topics.

ISAC Student Portal

The ISAC Student Portal is where you'll apply for many of ISAC's programs. There are also tools to keep track of college planning.
Quick Links

About ISAC
- Contact ISAC
- Employment
- Executive Director
- The Commission
- FOIA

Social Networks
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram

800.899.ISAC (4722)
e-Messaging
Get the latest news & updates from ISAC

Order ISAC Materials

Applications
ISAC Publications

• PDF versions available online for viewing or printing

• You can order printed materials on our website by clicking “Order Materials” at the bottom of the page

• Materials are free and will be shipped at no cost
  • Takes approximately 10 days for delivery
ISAC e-Messaging

Sign up to receive latest new and updates from ISAC, including:

- ISAC's Programs and Services
- Monetary Award Program (MAP) Suspense Date
- Professional Development Opportunities, etc.
Free financial aid training for college-access professionals in Illinois

Topics include:

- FAFSA Line-by-Line
- Alternative Application Overview
- Working with Special Student Populations
- Monthly PD Webinars
- Financial Aid Certification Series
ISAC Services
ISACorps

Near-peer mentoring
- One-on-one assistance for students and their families
- College and career exploration
- Completing financial aid applications
- Resumes

Presentations and workshops:
- Financial Aid Process presentation
- College 101 presentation
- Managing College Costs presentation
- Welcome to High School presentation
- Financial Aid Completion workshop
- Financial Aid Offer workshop and more!

Connect with your local ISACorps Member

The ISACorps are here to help you through the college planning process! ISACorps members are recent college graduates from across the state that can help you with the ins and outs of selecting and applying to college, scholarship searches, student financial aid, and financial aid application completion. Meet with your local ISACorps member for free one-on-one assistance or at FREE college fairs and financial aid workshops in your community.

Now is the time to complete your 2024-25 financial aid form!
If you are applying to college for 2024-25, you will want to complete the 2024-25 FAFSA, or if you are qualifying undocumented student, the 2024-25 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid, so you can get money to help pay for college! Find the FAFSA at fafsa.gov. (Please note that the U.S. Department of Education has shared that during the FAFSA "soft launch" period, users may experience a waiting room and pauses in availability of the application as the Department does site maintenance and makes needed updates. Qualifying undocumented students can use the Alternative Application to apply for state financial aid. ISACorpsAlternativeApp

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Additional Language: Spanish
Completing the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid User Guide

The Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act, which went into effect on January 1, 2020, provides that “a student who is an Illinois resident and who is not otherwise eligible for federal financial aid, including, but not limited to, a transgender student who is disqualified for failure to register for selective service or a noncitizen student who has not obtained lawful permanent residence, shall be eligible for state financial aid and benefits ...”.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has developed the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid to provide a pathway for students who meet the provisions of the RISE Act to apply for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant. The Alternative Application collects much of the same data as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), but is administered by ISAC.

The Alternative Application Process

- Questions will be presented to help determine if you are eligible to complete this application or if you should complete the FAFSA®.
- You will be provided with guidance on which application to complete after answering the pre-screening questions.
- Data collected in the pre-screening questions will be retained by ISAC and will not be shared with colleges.

Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act and Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

(last updated August 11, 2022)

The Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act allows eligible undocumented students and transgender students disqualified from federal financial aid due to failure to register for Selective Service (see Transgender Students area below for more explanation) to apply for all forms of state financial aid. The Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid provides a way for these qualified students to apply for Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants, the state’s largest need-based grant program for low-income college students.

Applying for ISAC Programs
Application for MAP: Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid
Application Process for MAP
Applying for Other ISAC Programs
GAP Access

• Online portal used to application submissions, program eligibility, and payment requests for ISAC-administered programs

• Illinois public and private high schools can upload their senior class roster into GAP access – this ensures high schools receive the most accurate information

For questions, contact:
lsac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

www.isac.org/gap-access
NEW! The Nonparticipation Form is Now Online!

- Students will complete the waiver via ISAC’s Student Portal – under Program Applications & Status Checks
- The student and/or parent will each need a student portal account
- Once completed and submitted, the information will populate in your class roster in the Gift Assistance Portal (GAP) Access

Note: Students who are 18 can complete the waiver themselves

https://studentportal.isac.org/
State Scholar Program

• Students in top 10% of graduating class are designated as State Scholars
  • No monetary value
  • Student can list this designation on resumes and college applications

• The high school submits a class roster with sixth semester data, which includes:
  • Class roster
  • Grade Point Average (GPA)
  • Class Rank (if applicable)

Data is submitted via GAP Access – this is separate upload from FAFSA Completion Initiative

www.isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/state-scholar-program
State Initiatives

www.isac.org/initiatives
College Changes Everything Campaign

- Mission of the CCE Campaign is to encourage to complete their college and financial aid applications
- To participate, schools and organizations:
  - Submit an Outreach Request Form and
  - Conduct one college application workshop and one financial aid completion workshop

www.collegechangeseverything.org/ccemonth
ISAC Transcript Exchange

• Provides a secure, online process for sharing transcript information for Illinois students
• Service is at NO COST to Illinois high schools
• To participate or learn more, contact: Lenore Smith Lenore.Smith@Illinois.gov (217) 685-2678
Illinois Postsecondary & Career Expectations Framework (PaCE)

• Framework outlines information a student should have to make the most informed decision about college and career planning

• ISAC PaCE support options:
  • PaCE Overview Presentation
  • PaCE Framework Development Workshop
  • PaCE Framework Implementation support

• For information, resources, or the PaCE Support Request Form, visit our website
Parent Outreach

ISAC IS HERE FOR PARENTS

Family engagement is important for student academic success!

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is the college access and financial aid agency in the state of Illinois that administers scholarships, grants, and student loan repayment/forgiveness programs. Our mission is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable.
Parent Outreach

• Work throughout the state, virtually or in-person
• Provide presentations for parents and one-on-one meetings as needed
• Working in collaboration with Community Based Organizations, schools and/or districts
• Help parents of first-generation college students understand the college planning, admissions and financial aid process
Parent Outreach Initiatives

Stand-alone presentations/workshop:

A) **Overview of ISAC’s programs and Services**
   - An overview of some of the ISAC’s free services and initiatives along with how parents can benefit from them and utilize them to help support their student.

B) **Early awareness in Educational Planning**
   - An emphasis on how early awareness of the different aspects in education can lead to more parent involvement which is essential for student’s success starting as early as middle school or 7th grade

C) **The Financial Aid Process**
   - Outlines the general financial aid process and provides insight on how financial aid works, how to apply for it, student eligibility, and how it can be used to help pay for college

D) **Financial Aid Offer Workshop**
   - Intended to help parents understand financial aid offers from colleges. Students usually receive these financial aid offers in the spring after submitting their Financial aid application
Parent Outreach Initiatives

4-session series - PowerPoint Presentations:

• This series of presentations address and discuss the various activities and tasks at each high school grade level that parents and other adult family members can do to help support their student and prepare them for the postsecondary path that best fits their needs and goals.

• These presentations are ideal for parents of students in 8th grade and/or high school.

1) **Being persistent**: Sharing a vision plan on setting your child up to continue their education beyond high school

2) **Pushing your child**: Setting up and preparing your child academically, meeting school requirements and discussing their future

3) **Finding the best fit**: Searching and finding a school that matches your child’s career goals

4) **Getting your hands in some money**: Ensuring financial assistance deadlines are met and selecting career path
Parent Outreach Initiatives

Chat Sessions:
Parents and other adult family members of first-generation college students are often unfamiliar with the college application and financial aid process that their students face.
Through this series of five informal, interactive conversations, we will address:

1) the core elements of the US Education System
2) strategies for career exploration
3) discuss and explain the differences between technical/vocational, community college and university
4) provide a general overview of the financial aid process and terminology (Merit vs need-based financial aid)
5) and how those who may be new to the college-going process can support their student with their academic goals
FAFSA Symposium

• Share updates on the FAFSA and Alternative Application
• Provides an opportunity for attendees to hear from presenters on how their schools and districts support students and families with financial aid applications.

2023 Example
Illinois Central College - **October 2**
Moraine Valley Community College - **November 7**
PaCE Symposium

• The PaCE Symposium brings people from across Illinois to share and learn how schools, districts, and communities are collaborating and advancing postsecondary and career readiness efforts using the Illinois PaCE Framework.

2023 Example

April 20th – Springfield Wyndham Hotel
May 11th - Virtual
The First Gen Symposium provides an opportunity for you to learn and share best practices for supporting first-generation students in postsecondary planning. At this year’s symposium, you will:

- Hear from programs actively seeking to increase belongingness among first-generation college students
- Hear from first-generation students and professionals on best practices and solutions that have come out of the barriers they faced
- Learn about developing events tailored to first-generation students

**2024 Example**

- **March 11** – North Central College
First Generation Scholars Network

To join the First Generation Scholars Network (FGSN), students can click the JOIN NOW! button on the Student Portal. Joining allows students to:

• Connect with an FGSN mentor
• Find an FGSN program on campus
• Join “check-in” events with other first-generation students

Services are free!

Join the Network

Ready to join? You can join using our online form.

JOIN NOW!

Have questions? Email us at ISAC.FirstGen@illinois.gov
First Up Podcast

**NEW!** – First gen podcast with advice and information for our first gen students.

**Topics include:**
- Financial Aid
- Parents
- Networking
- Dealing w/ Stress
Resources - Counselors

- Resources available on how to help students complete FAFSA, learn about different initiatives and resources from the Department of Education.
ISAC Student Portal
The ISAC Student Portal has all the tools you need to help you with college planning, financial aid, student loans and money management, and even career exploration and job search—all free and just a click away!

**COLLEGE AND SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH**
Check out resources and apps from ISAC’s partners to search college profiles, both nationally and specifically in Illinois, and to search a database of billions of dollars in scholarships.

**FINANCIAL AID**
Need financial aid for college but not sure what’s out there and how to apply? Learn about financial aid with the FinAid Game, use our MAP Estimator to determine your eligibility for a MAP grant, and compare your financial aid offers with our easy-to-use, online Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet.

**IN-PERSON AND ONLINE HELP WITH COLLEGE PLANNING AND FINANCIAL AID**
Find a free in-person workshop in your area, an online workshop, or contact your local ISACorps member for free one-on-one assistance with college planning, college and financial aid applications, and more.

Plus...more tools and resources to assist you!
ISAC Student Portal

• Free college and career planning platform for students including:
  • Resources
  • Toolbox
  • ISACorps
  • ISAC Programs
  • Now Playing

www.studentportal.isac.org
Student Portal - Resources

- Appily
- Claim Your Future
- Illinois College2Career
- Illinois WorkNet
- ISAC College Q&A
- College Scorecard
- Illinois college/university food pantries
Appily

- A scholarship and college search platform
- Designed for students to explore different options based on preferences and eligibility
Claim Your Future

• Financial literacy game that allows students to choose a career and navigate through different spending choices

• Game can be played online or using the game kit, which includes:
  • Career wheels based on Illinois employment statistics
  • Printable budget worksheet
  • Additional financial education resources

• Limited to one kit per school
Illinois College2Career

• College search tool for Illinois colleges or universities
• Search options include:
  • Career Outcomes
  • Costs
  • Financial Aid
  • Graduation Rates
  • Student Debt
Illinois WorkNet

• A web platform that provides individuals with resources that focuses on:
  • Skills inventory
  • Interest profiler
  • Job searching
  • Resume building
  • Career exploration and preparations
ISAC College Q&A

• Service for students and parents to text us their questions about college and financial aid
• Questions are answered by ISAC staff during regular business hours
• Students are sent targeted messages by grade level
  • i.e. It’s time to complete your FAFSA! Visit www.FAFSA.gov to complete it.
• To get started, text your first and last name to the number (English 847, Spanish 773)

Check out the ISAC College Q&A text messaging service - get your questions about college planning and financial aid answered via text message, and receive important information about college planning events and deadlines.

To use the service simply text your first and last name to: (847) 243-6470
Servicio en español: (773) 823-0570
Resources for Food, Housing and Medical Care

Ideally, a student’s financial aid package will cover most of their cost of attendance charges, including tuition, fees and living expenses, however, when that is not the case, here are some suggested resources that may be available to assist students.

Food Resources
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamps) - helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health.
  - Illinois Department of Human Services Help Line: 800-843-6514
  - Eligibility and application information: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=24995
- Illinois Hunger Coalition Hunger Hotline
  - 800-359-2163
  - www.ihunger.org
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - provides temporary financial assistance for pregnant women and families with one or more dependent children.
  - Illinois Department of Human Services Help Line: 800-843-6514
  - Eligibility and application information: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30706
- Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) - a food assistance program for women, infants, and children.
  - Illinois Department of Public Health: 217-782-2166
  - Eligibility and application information: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30513
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) - a federal program that provides food at no cost to help supplement the diets of needy low-income households.
- Your institution’s Student Services Department may be aware of school or community-based resources or local food banks that can provide assistance if you do not meet the requirements for SNAP benefits. See the list of Illinois College Food Pantries on the following page.
  - Links to other local food resources: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31145

Housing & Utilities Resources
- Emergency and Transitional Housing Program - gives immediate and comprehensive shelter services to homeless persons and persons at risk of becoming homeless.
  - Illinois Department of Human Services Help Line: 800-843-6514
  - Information: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30102
  - Other programs: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29723
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) - helps keep families safe and healthy through initiatives that assist families with energy costs.
  - https://www.acf.hhs.gov/lowincome/lieheap

September 2020

Child and Dependent Care

If you need help caring for children or other dependents while attending college, several resources are available to you.

Illinois Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides financial assistance to student parents who qualify. Eligible students are those who:
- live in Illinois
- work and/or are enrolled in an educational program
- have children under 13 who need care (or up to 19 for children with special needs), and
- have a family income below certain limits (based on family size).

With CCAP, child care pay-outs could be as little as $2 a month. To learn more about the Child Care Assistance Program and to apply, visit the Illinois Department of Human Services website (www.dhs.state.il.us). Also available at the DHS website:
- Affordable Child Care Brochure (English)
- Guia de Atencion a la Mancomunidad (Spanish)
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Policy Manual

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

For help in finding local child care options, visit the website of the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (incncco.org), a statewide organization that partners with local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies to make quality, affordable child care available to children and families in Illinois. Child care resources and referral services are available in all Illinois communities through a local CCR&R Agency.

- Available services by local area: https://www.inccra.org/look4childcare
- Other resources: https://www.inccra.org/inccra/cco

Dependent Care Allowance

A student’s cost of attendance (COA) for college is a key factor in determining the amount of financial aid that a student may be able to receive. For students with dependents, an allowance for costs for dependent care can be included in the COA, and it can be for care that includes but is not limited to class time, study time, internships, and commuting time for the student. The amount of the allowance will be based on the number and age of the dependents and cannot exceed reasonable costs in the community for the type of care provided.

By including the costs of child and/or dependent care in a student’s financial aid calculation, the student may be able to access additional financial assistance. This may include loans, which, it is important to note, must be repaid, but some students may also be eligible for more grant or scholarship money. Students who work directly with the financial aid office at their college or university to determine eligibility, get guidance on whether this adjustment would benefit them, and recalculate their financial aid.

Because the college is not always aware that a student has dependent care expenses, it’s important for the student to initiate contact with the financial aid office and explain the need to include this allowance in their COA so it can be taken into consideration when determining the full amount of financial aid the student may be eligible to receive.

Additionally, if a student has a special circumstance that would justify an increase in the dependent care allowance, the student should provide that information to the financial aid office as well. The college may require supporting documentation for special circumstances.
Student Portal - Toolbox

- FinAid game
- Internships and summer job postings
- College checklist
- Event calendar
- Financial aid comparison worksheet
- PaCE student checklist
- MAP Estimator
- State Scholar Program badge claim & verification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toolbox</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FinAid Game</td>
<td>How much do you know about student financial aid? Take the quiz and find out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship and Summer Jobs</td>
<td>Use the Job Board to find a co-op position, summer job or internship at an Illinois company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Checklist</td>
<td>Stay on top of all the steps you need to take in planning for college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Calendar</td>
<td>Attend a free college application planning or financial aid workshop in your area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet</td>
<td>Easily compare financial aid offers from colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PaCE Student Checklist</td>
<td>Explore the activities and experiences for grades K-12 that can help you prepare for college and career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP Estimator</td>
<td>Going to college in Illinois? Find out if you can get a MAP grant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Scholar Program Badge Claim &amp; Verification</td>
<td>Claim and download your official badge, and have schools verify its authenticity.</td>
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Financial Aid Game

- Game to test financial aid knowledge
- Students can be divided into groups to work together to answer questions correctly and earn points
- Two levels
  - Financial aid 101
  - Advanced financial aid
Internships and Summer Jobs

• Listing of co-op positions, jobs, and internships for students at different Illinois companies across the state

• Expose students to experiential learning opportunities as they explore different careers

• Search by:
  • Keywords
  • Locations
  • Internships
  • Jobs
ISAC Event Calendar

• Students and parents can find FREE public events near them hosted by the ISACorps
• FAFSA & Alternative Application completion workshops
• Financial aid presentations
Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet

- Worksheet that allows students to compare up to 3 financial aid offers at a time
- Helps student calculate out-of-pocket costs
- Gives a better understanding of the components within financial aid offers such as:
  - Cost of attendance
  - Gift aid
  - Federal work study
  - Student loan aid
  - Remaining need
MAP Estimator

• Calculator that provides a student’s estimated MAP award based on:
  • SAI
  • Dependency status
  • Colleges of Interest
• Ability to compare 3 Illinois schools at a time
State Scholar Program Badge

- Students who are designated as Illinois State Scholars may claim a digital badge on the Student Portal.
- The digital badge can be shared on online profiles and social media accounts.
- Schools are able to verify badge authenticity to ensure that students have been selected as State Scholars.
Program Applications & Status Checks

- MAP Paid Credit Hours
- ING status check and application
- IVG status check and application
- MTI status check and application
- Grant Program for Exonerees application
- Opt-out Waiver (FAFSA Nonparticipation Form)
Student Portal – Now Playing

ISAC College Minute videos
  • Financial Aid
  • College Planning and College-Going

Recorded Facebook Live videos

ISAC tutorials for college and career-exploration tools

❖ Videos in available in English and Spanish
Thank You!

Questions? Contact us at

isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov
ILASFAA 2024
BACK TO THE FUTURE
PRE-PANDEMIC POST-PANDEMIC