

ISAC Operational Update and Program News

June 25, 2025



2024-25 Award Year Fiscal Year (FY) 2025

MAP Year-End Close Out

- Although the 2024-25 claim deadline dates for all terms have passed, ISAC will continue to accept and hold MAP initial claims and increases to previously-submitted claims for all terms through (and including) Tuesday, July 1, 2025
 - Schools should regularly monitor the MAP system to review payment results as we continue to monitor available funding and release more claims each day
- Adjustments to cancel or reduce previously-submitted MAP claims will continue to be accepted for all terms through (and including) Friday, August 1, 2025
- Effective Monday, August 4, 2025, 2024-25 data in the MAP system will be available in historical view only
- Friday, June 6, 2025 was the last date on which:
 - 2024-25 Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) data will be received from the FAFSA Processing System (FPS) and reflected in the MAP system
 - The 2024-25 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid will be available for students to complete and submit to ISAC

Year-End Close Out – Other Programs

- ISAC will continue to accept initial claims and increases to previously-submitted claims for all terms through (and including) Tuesday, July 1, 2025 for:
 - Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program
 - Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program
 - Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Program
 - Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program
 - Nursing Education Scholarships (NES)
 - Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program
- Adjustments to cancel or reduce previously-submitted claims for this program will continue to be accepted for all terms through (and including) Friday, August 1, 2025
- Effective Monday, August 4, 2025, data for these programs will be available in historical view only
- Continue making necessary adjustments and reconciling data
 - Due to the payment offset process, only adjustments and data reconciliation activities should take place at this time for the 2024-25 programs
 - After ISAC determines that all payment processing is final, colleges with an outstanding amount owed to ISAC will receive an e-mail notice indicating the total amount to be returned for each program.
 - Until then, no funds should be returned to ISAC

ING Grant and IVG Year-End Close Out

- **Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant**

- The ING Grant system will continue to accept 2024-25 benefit usage data for all terms through (and including) Friday, August 1, 2025
 - Summer-term benefit usage data submitted on or before Tuesday, July 1, 2025, will be considered timely
 - Although the dates by which fall- and spring-term benefit usage data must have been submitted to be considered timely have passed, colleges are still encouraged to report data for these terms no later than August 1
- Effective Monday, August 4, 2025, 2024-25 data in the ING Grant system will become available for historical view only

- **Illinois Veteran Grant**

- The IVG system will continue to accept 2024-25 benefit usage data for all terms through (including) Friday, August 1, 2025
- Effective Monday, August 4, 2025, 2024-25 data in the IVG system will become available for historical view only

Payment Processing - Adjustments

- Once you received results and the requests have processed, ensure that results are as expected.
- If a student's situation has changed, do an adjustment
- If an error was made in the initial request, submit a correction
- An adjustment or correction is simply a subsequent payment request
- Always request what the student is eligible for – for the term.
 - ISAC does the math (calculates the difference between 1st and 2nd requests)
- Dollars are offset against future payment, so no money is returned until the end of the processing cycle

Reconciliation

- After receiving funds for a term, colleges are required to reconcile the payment for accuracy and submit all necessary corrections to student records on a timely and regular basis
- Award amounts may only be applied to the students for whom ISAC processed a payment
 - Award payments made in the name of one recipient cannot be applied to another recipient
 - A refund of a payment made must be submitted to ISAC and a payment request must be processed for the proper recipient
- Cancellations of prior payments will be deducted from any future payments until the end of the academic year, when refunds must be identified and returned to ISAC no later than 60 days after the term ends
 - When the college receives payment **after** the end of the term, the college has 60 days following the receipt of the funds to identify and return any refunds

Reconciliation – By Term & At Year End

- Review the data when you receive results
 - Did a student's situation change? (hours, eligibility)
- Make any adjustment that is necessary
 - Confirm the correction
- **Confirm** claims
 - Have you entered all the claims according to your system into GAP Access
- **Count** dollar amounts vouchered
- **Compare** claims to dollars
- **Reconcile** the dollars at the end of the year by comparing “claims made” and “dollars vouchered”
 - If your last report shows funds due to ISAC, that means more dollars were vouchered than claims received

Reconciliation - Helpful Hints

- Schedule payment requesting and schedule a review of the results
- Make adjustments soon after you receive results and/or on a regular schedule
- Match the invoice number with the voucher when it arrives, then with the payment when it arrives
- Use the filtered student list screen to see the history of transactions for a student

Payment Offset Process

- Payment is made to colleges through an offset process for most ISAC programs
- As part of this process, new payment requests and adjustments are compared to outstanding amounts owed to ISAC, and payment is made accordingly
- This system was developed to accommodate the many changes in student eligibility that can occur during the awarding and disbursement of financial aid
 - Including decreases, increases to awards, initial requests, and full refunds
- **Actual funds should not be sent to ISAC until after the end of the regular school year, after final reconciliation has been completed**
- **Schools with an outstanding amount owed to ISAC at the end of the school year will receive a notice indicating the total amount to be returned**
 - Typically in August

Payment Offset Process

Payment Offset procedures apply to the following programs that are administered in GAP Access:

- Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program,
- Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program,
- Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Program,
- Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Program,
- Monetary Award Program (MAP),
- Nursing Education Scholarships (NES), and
- Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program.

Returning Funds to ISAC

- When it is necessary for schools to return scholarship and grant program funds to ISAC, a Gift Assistance Refund Check Form should be completed and submitted along with the payment.
- The purpose of the form is to:
 - Provide information about program funds being returned
 - Ensure that refunds are credited to the proper account (both school and/or student), program, and academic year
 - Provide student-level information for funds that are being returned
- The Refund Check Form, along with the check(s) made payable to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, should be sent to:

Finance & Accounting Division - J10
Illinois Student Assistance Commission
1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-5209



ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-5209
866 247 2172
isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

**GIFT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
REFUND CHECK FORM**

Please report the dollar amount refunded for each program/year if submitting a single check with funds for multiple programs or academic years.

Mail Refund Checks to: Finance & Accounting Division - J10
Illinois Student Assistance Commission
1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-5209

To ensure refunds are credited to the correct account (both school and/or student) and the appropriate ISAC gift assistance program, please complete the requested information below.

DATE SENT TO ISAC	
SCHOOL NAME	
MAP CODE /ED CODE/IVG CODE	
PROGRAM(S)	
ACADEMIC YEAR(S)	
VOUCHER NUMBER <small>(specific to the above academic year)</small>	
TERM(S)	
CHECK NUMBER	
CHECK DOLLAR AMOUNT	\$

REASON FOR REFUND

Returning Amount Due at End of Year: Per ISAC's letter indicating total amount owed.

Current and/or Prior Year Refund:

- Provide the students' names and Social Security numbers (last 4-digits);
- Indicate actual credit hours enrolled;
- List dollar amount refunded for each term; and
- State the institution's reason for the refund.

External Compliance: ISAC's Finance & Accounting Division will forward a copy of the Final Program Review Report to the appropriate internal department.

Other Refund: Provide Explanation

ISAC 83247/06/19/000247 Web 6/18

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Court of Claims

- Schools or students can seek recourse for claims that could not be approved in time to be paid during the regular fiscal year or lapse period
 - Generally, the circumstance for submitting a claim through the Court of Claims is due to a delay in payment processing such as an appeal being approved late in the award year
 - Late claims in programs for which timely claims were prorated will not be approved for payment through the Court of Claims
- A student or school submits a Court of Claims Complaint form with documentation to the Illinois Court of Claims office, and the Court of Claims office forwards the claim form to the Illinois Attorney General's office, which represents ISAC
 - The AG's office consults with ISAC to determine what action should occur with the claim form (e.g., eligible, ineligible, partial eligibility) in accordance with the rules and regulations that govern the program
 - ISAC reviews the documentation and returns the claim with an approval or reason for denial back to the AG's office
- After a decision is made, the AG's office conveys that decision and returns the claim form back to the Court of Claims office which then renders its decision to the school or student

Court of Claims -- Documentation

- Documentation must accompany all claim forms submitted by the school or student and clearly state the amount of the charges paid by the student for the enrollment period in dispute.
- If the total amount claimed is against the same agency within the same state fiscal year (July 1 - June 30), multiple invoices or other charges can be filed on the same claim form
- A claim must include a Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form and an ISAC Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Request Form
- The Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form is available on the Illinois Court of Claims website, through ISAC and postsecondary institutions
- The ISAC Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Request Form (or the school's own form) must also be included with the Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form and documentation to provide all of the information necessary to evaluate the request and make a decision to approve or deny the claim

Court of Claims -- Documentation

- To expedite ISAC's servicing the claim, including a letter explaining why a student(s) payment was not requested during the academic year, is suggested
 - Additional documentation, if necessary to verify the student(s) is in compliance with all program requirements should also be included
- The Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form, the ISAC Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Request Form along with any itemized bills, invoices, or other materials that substantiate the claim are to be sent to the Illinois Court of Claims following the instructions on the claim form, and must include the required number of copies for each claim
- All correspondence must be written, and filing a claim does not guarantee payment
- There is no fee required to submit Lapsed Appropriation Claims
- There is a two-year time limit to file Court of Claims request
- Submit claim forms and documentation to:
 - Deputy Clerk
 - Illinois Court of Claims
 - 630 South College
 - Springfield, IL 62756
- If you have any questions, refer to the Illinois Court of Claims website for contact information

Court of Claims

{Court of Claims Act; 705 ILCS 505}

[Court of Claims Process](#)

[Documentation](#)

[Submit Claim Forms](#)

Schools or students can seek recourse for claims that could not be approved in time to be paid during the regular fiscal year or lapse period. Generally the circumstance for submitting a claim through the Court of Claims is due to a delay in payment processing such as an appeal being approved late in the award year. Late claims in programs for which timely claims were prorated will not be approved for payment through the Court of Claims. In addition, claims submitted requesting payment of the difference between the amount that ISAC pays for the Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG) and the Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant the school is responsible to pay will not be approved.

Court of Claims Process

- A student or school submits a Court of Claims form to the Court of Claims office.
- The Illinois Court of Claims office forwards the claim to the Attorney General's office which represents ISAC.
- The Attorney General's office consults with the school and the student to complete the claim form (i.e., eligible, ineligible, partial).

- ISAC reviews the documentation and returns the claim with an approval or reason for denial back to the Attorney General's office.
- After a decision is made, the Attorney General's office conveys that decision and returns the claim form back to the Court of Claims office which then renders its decision to the school or student.

Documentation

Documentation must accompany all claim forms submitted by the school or student and clearly state the amount of the charges paid by the student for the enrollment period in dispute. If the total amount claimed is against the same agency within the same fiscal year (the state fiscal year runs from July 1-June 30), multiple invoices or other charges can be filed on the same claim form.

A claim must include a Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form and an ISAC Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Request Form.

- The [Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form](#) is available on the [Illinois Court of Claims website](#), through ISAC and postsecondary institutions.
- The [ISAC Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Request Form](#) (or the school's own form) must also be included with the Court of Claims Lapsed Appropriation Form and documentation to provide all of the information necessary to evaluate the request and make a decision to approve or deny the claim. To expedite ISAC's servicing the claim, including a letter explaining why a student(s) payment was not requested during the academic year is suggested. Additional documentation, if necessary to verify the student(s) is in compliance with all Monetary Award Program (MAP) requirements and/or all other gift assistance programs should also be included.

[MAP Electronic Processing](#)

[MAP Advising Data Collection](#)

[MPCH Adjustments \(COVID: Spring 2020\)](#)

[NON-MAP Programs Adjustments \(COVID: Spring 2020\)](#)

[ING Grant Electronic Processing](#)

[IVG Electronic Processing](#)

[ECACE Electronic Processing](#)

[GA Electronic Processing](#)

[MTI Electronic Processing](#)

[Refunds And Unpaid Claims](#)

[Returning Program Funds To ISAC](#)

[Court Of Claims](#)

[Lapsed Appropriation Claim Form](#)

[ISAC Lapsed Appropriation Request Form](#)

[Payment Offset And Reconciliation](#)

[Payment Offset And Reconciliation](#)

[Verification Of Enrollment](#)

[Record Retention](#)

[Loan Counseling](#)

[Reinstatement Of Title IV And State Student Aid Eligibility](#)

[Loan Rehabilitation](#)



Illinois Court of Claims
Office of the Secretary of State
630 S. College St., Springfield, IL 62756

(Complete four copies)

Lapsed Appropriation Form

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Claimant

vs.

Respondent,
STATE OF ILLINOIS

Claimant seeks from Respondent payment in the sum of \$ _____ rendered as stated on the attached statement, and made demand for such payments have lapsed.

Claimant further states that no assignment of said claim has been made and Claimant is justly entitled to payment of the same.



Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Lapsed Appropriation Request Form
for Court of Claims filings for the Monetary Award Program (MAP)
and all Scholarship and Specialized Grant Programs

1799 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-2299
606.247.2172
E-mail: isac@state.il.gov

When filing a claim with the Illinois Court of Claims, include the information requested below. Use this form or create your own form that includes the same information requested on this form. Attach one copy of the request form to each of the six copies of the Lapsed Appropriation Claim form and documentation filed with the Illinois Court of Claims. There is a two-year time limit to file a claim for funds (705 ILCS 505/22(h)).

SCHOOL'S MAP CODE	
ACADEMIC YEAR	
ISAC PROGRAM	
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS CLAIMED	

SSN	NAME (Last, First)	Term*	Amount of Claim	Total to Be Paid This Term	Cr Hrs	CPS Date/ Trans#	For ISAC Decision Only	
							Approved Yes/No	Reason Denied

Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Lapsed Appropriation Request Form
for Court of Claims filings for the Monetary Award Program (MAP)
and all Scholarship and Specialized Grant Programs

INSTRUCTIONS and DEFINITIONS

- SSN:** Last four digits of Student's Social Security Number (SSN)
- NAME:** Student's last name and first name
- Term:** The term for which payment is requested. Use a different line for each term.
- Amount of Claim:** The amount being claimed through the Illinois Court of Claim for this student, for this term.
- Total to Be Paid This Term:** The amount being claimed on this form, **plus** the amount already paid for this student, for this term.

Examples:

Student A is eligible for \$2,000. Previous MAP payment = \$1,200. Amount of this claim = \$600 [cr hrs = 14].
Total to be paid this term = \$1,800

Legislative Update

Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget

- Governor Pritzker has signed SB 2510 (operating budget bill) and HB 1075 (budget implementation bill – BIMP) which together provide funding and statutory authority for Illinois programs and services, including ISAC's programs for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).
- The bills are now considered law and are officially [Public Act 104-0003](#) and [Public Act 104-0002](#)
- The portion of the budget dealing with ISAC resembles the Governor's original FY26 request for the agency, with a small number of exceptions
- New funding includes these highlights:
 - An increase of \$10 million for the **Monetary Award Program (MAP)**, bringing funding for MAP grants to \$721,566,200
 - A new \$1.25 million appropriation from the Education Assistance Fund (EAF), one of the state's general funds, for the **Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Program**.
 - In its initial year, FY25, the program was funded by a one-time transfer to ISAC from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget

- Some ISAC programs did undergo cuts, including the following:
 - The **Prepare for Illinois's Future test preparation program** was zeroed out after being allocated a little under \$10 million in FY25
 - The new **iGROW Tech Scholarship** for students in information technology and related fields was not funded for FY26 (2025-26)
 - The lump sum used to fund the **Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program** and the **School and Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program** was reduced
 - This was allocated \$6 million in FY25 but will only receive \$2 million in FY26
 - If demand for these programs in FY26 is consistent with past years, this lower amount will be sufficient to serve eligible applicants for the programs
 - The **Nurse Educator Loan Repayment Program** will receive \$400,000
 - This is a decrease of \$100,000 from the prior year, but still more than has been claimed for the program in recent years

Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget

- Other ISAC-administered programs are generally funded at their FY25 levels, including:
 - The merit-based, means-tested **AIM HIGH** grant for public university students (\$50 million)
 - The **Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship** (\$5 million)
 - Reimbursements for public institutions for the **Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)** and **Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant** (\$6 million for public universities in the ISAC budget, plus \$4,264,200 for the Illinois Community College Board to reimburse community colleges)
- Additional details on the ISAC portion of the budget will be available in the June 26, 2025, Commission meeting Agenda Book, which will be posted at ISAC's website [here.](#))

FY26 ISAC Program Appropriation Summary

Gift Assistance Programs

- MAP – \$721,566,200
- ECACE Scholarship – \$5,000,000
- Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois – \$10,750,000
- MTI Scholarship – \$8,000,000
- Nursing Education Scholarship (NES) – \$4,000,000
- Grant Programs for Dependents of PFC Officers – \$1,300,000
- Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship – \$1,100,000
- Grant Program for Exonerees – \$150,000
- Post-Master of Social Work Scholarship Program and School & Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program (combined appropriation) – \$2,000,000
- ING Grant and IVG reimbursement – \$6,000,000
- AIM HIGH Grant – \$50,000,000
 - Funds are disbursed in lump sums by ISAC to public universities

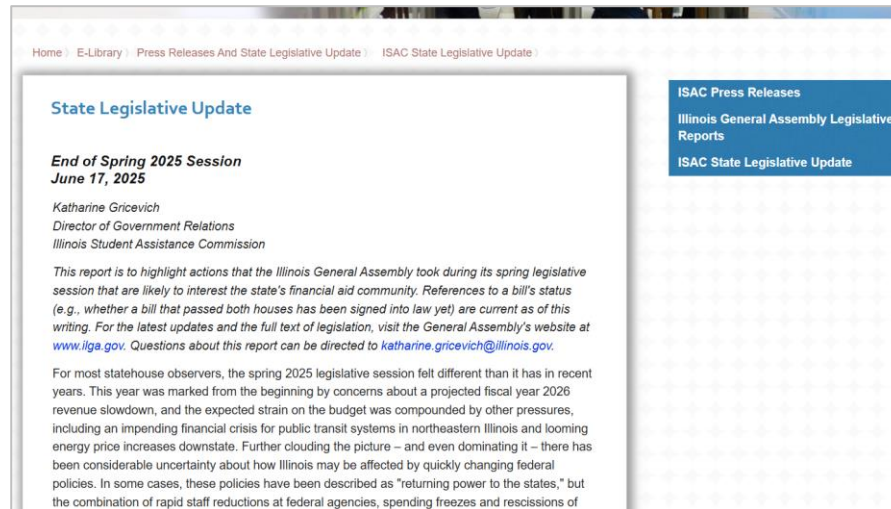
FY26 ISAC Program Appropriation Summary

Loan Repayment Programs

- Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment – \$7,500,000
- Human Services Professional Loan Repayment – \$1,250,000 (plus remaining FY25 funds)
- Illinois Teachers Loan Repayment – \$975,000
- Nurse Educator Loan Repayment – \$400,000
- Veterans' Home Medical Providers' Loan Repayment – \$26,400

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

- A summary of actions that the Illinois General Assembly took during its spring legislative session that may be of interest to the state's financial aid community is available in a State Legislative Update in the E-Library, posted June 17, 2025
 - isac.org/e-library/prs-rls-st-leg/isac-state-legislative-updates/



- For the latest updates and the full text of legislation, visit the General Assembly's website at www.ilga.gov.
- Questions about these updates may be directed to katharine.gricevich@illinois.gov

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

PASSED BOTH HOUSES

- [House Bill 3522](#) an initiative of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Governor's Office, will create a **direct admissions program**.
 - Through the program, which is being developed by a team across the state's education agencies, high school students will receive general admissions offers to Illinois public institutions based on grade point average (GPA), reducing some of the uncertainty and costs of the usual application process.
 - An opt-in process and communications campaign are expected to launch this August for students who will be high school juniors during the 2025-26 school year.
- [House Bill 3096](#) will require high schools to designate a **point of contact for FAFSA-related communications** and to receive training on the FAFSA graduation requirement and the free supports available to students
- [House Bill 3097](#) will require high schools to make **assistance available during the school day** for students to complete their portion of the FAFSA. Schools may request support from ISAC to help fulfill this mandate

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

PASSED BOTH HOUSES

- [SB 2039](#) requires IBHE, ICCB, and ISAC to collaborate on producing a **data dashboard** intended for use by policymakers and researchers
- [HB 460](#) would expand the existing **Retention of Illinois Students and Equity Act (the RISE Act)** to cover financial aid offered by units of local government.
 - In effect, this means that if a unit of local government offers financial aid, it would need to allow undocumented Illinois students to apply for and receive that aid if the students qualify to receive in-state tuition and to be considered for state-funded financial aid under the RISE Act.
- [HB 1149](#) would require postsecondary institutions to establish policies for awarding **academic credit for students who have training and experience as firefighters** (assuming the institution has a program for which this credit would be applicable).

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

PASSED BOTH HOUSES

- [HB 1430](#) would allow the State Treasurer to establish a program for student loan refinancing. It would also remove the Treasurer's authority to establish or fund income share agreements.
- [HB 2967](#) would require high schools to contact their local community colleges first when seeking to establish a dual credit program, bar high schools from partnerships with out-of-state institutions, and establish a standing Dual Credit Committee to ensure continued collaboration among stakeholders working with ICCB and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).
- [HB 3385](#) would require each public university and community college to make at least three **mental health professionals available for students**.
 - Smaller institutions could employ fewer professionals based on benchmarks set by an existing advisory group.

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

PASSED BOTH HOUSES

- [SB 1376](#) creates the **Historical Cost of Attendance Disclosure Act**. It would require each public or private college or university in the state that offers baccalaureate degrees to post its cost of attendance on its website for each of the 10 academic years immediately preceding the effective date of the Act and for every academic year thereafter. In posting the cost of attendance, the institution must delineate which expenses are included in the Internal Revenue Service's Form 1098-T and which are not.
- [SB 1537](#) establishes a framework for the state to regulate **income-share agreements** (ISAs) under the agencies of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) and the Office of the Attorney General.
- [SB 1958](#) would amend the existing **Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act** to require public universities to enter articulation agreements with community colleges at their request.

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

APPROVED BY ONLY ONE CHAMBER (DID NOT COMPLETE THE PROCESS):

- A bill to replace the existing **Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship** with a new **Teachers of Illinois Scholarship** passed the House but was not called for a final Senate vote before adjournment. The current MTI program is facing a legal challenge, and this proposal ([Senate Bill 1331, House Amendment #1](#) – Peters/Buckner) would revise the program to remove race-based criteria and focus the program primarily on teacher vacancies.
- The House approved language to allow **incarcerated students to receive MAP grants** ([HB 2466](#)), but the measure was not called for a vote in the Senate.
- The House passed, but the Senate did not approve, a bill to establish **stipends for student teachers and their cooperating teachers** ([HB 1375](#)).
 - Lawmakers did approve [HB 3528](#) which bars institutions from requiring that student teachers in their educator preparation programs be unpaid.
- The House voted to expand the existing **School and Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program** in several ways. [HB 3511](#), which was not called for a Senate vote, would add county-employed social workers, increase the maximum grant, and allow social workers to qualify while working with/for police.

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

ADDITIONAL NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVES THAT WERE NOT APPROVED:

- Legislators discussed but did not vote on a bill to adopt what was described as a **Public University Equitable Funding Formula** ([HB 1581](#) and [SB 13](#)).
- The Governor's office, community college representatives, and representatives of four-year institutions spent many hours negotiating a framework for allowing **community colleges to offer a limited number of baccalaureate degree programs** in areas of demonstrated workforce need. The House Executive Committee advanced the proposal (contained in [House Amendment #2 to SB 1988](#)) to the full House but the proposal was not called for a vote of the full chamber before adjournment.
- [HB 2791](#), an ISAC initiative, would have directed ISAC to **release from their repayment obligations** any recipient of a scholarship, grant, or waiver that has been or may be converted to a student loan under a state program for which the Commission is responsible for collections. The bill was assigned to the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee but not called for a vote. The agency will continue to explore this concept as well as other options for providing relief or flexibility to those with outstanding debts who may have difficulty in repaying.

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

ADDITIONAL NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVES THAT WERE NOT APPROVED:

- [HB 3551](#) was assigned to the House Higher Education Committee but never called for a vote. The bill would have established a **scholarship program explicitly for adult students in online college programs**, and it was intended to benefit students of Western Governors University, a not-for-profit institution based in Utah.
- The **Illinois Veteran Grant** would have been expanded under [SB 1345](#) to a person who, among other requirements, **served less than one year of federal active duty and received an uncharacterized discharge as a result of a service-connected disability**.
- The **Illinois Veteran Grant** program would have been restructured under [SB 1353](#). The two primary components of this proposal were (1) to establish a **sliding scale of eligibility for the Illinois Veteran Grant based on the length of the veteran's active-duty service** and (2) to **provide that a grant could be transferred to a qualified dependent**.
- The **Illinois National Guard Grant** would have been expanded to members of the Army Reserves under [HB 3234](#), which was assigned to committee but never considered for a vote.

Legislative Highlights Beyond the Budget

ADDITIONAL NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVES THAT WERE NOT APPROVED:

- Under [SB 2000](#), which was assigned to committee but never called for a vote, institutions would have been responsible for detailed reporting about the outcomes of the existing **Student Debt Assistance Act**. The Act limits the circumstances under which an institution can withhold a transcript or diploma because of amounts a student or graduate owes to the college.
- Additional measures that were filed but not approved would have created a **Mental Health Professionals Scholarship** ([SB 1322](#)), a scholarship intended to support **women in STEM** ([HB 2806](#)), a scholarship for **students in the trades** ([HB 3807](#)), and new scholarship and loan repayment programs for **school support personnel including nurses, psychologists, and counselors** ([HB 2848](#)). Other proposals would have expanded an existing loan repayment program to include **occupational therapists** ([HB 3283](#)), repealed the **Educational Loan Default Act** (which restricts hiring and contracting with individuals who have defaulted on student loans) ([HB 3461](#)), and added a **work obligation to MAP** for some recipients ([SB 293](#)).

Next Scheduled GA Session Days

- The 104th General Assembly concluded its first spring legislative session in the early hours of June 1, 2025.
- Members are scheduled to return to Springfield on October 14, 2025, for the annual legislative Veto Session.
- However, many observers have noted during this uncertain year that a summer "special session" could be convened if either the Governor or both the Senate President and the House Speaker determine that circumstances require it.

2025-26 Award Year Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

2025-26 MAP

- Consistent with usual practice, the FY26 MAP Start-Up Formula that was approved at ISAC's September 19, 2024 Commission Meeting was a carryover of the prior year's (FY25) MAP Recompute Formula
- However, as ISAC monitored 2025-26 FAFSA application volume, there continued to be indications that FY26 application volume would be higher than FY25, along with expectations that enrollment levels would remain at increased levels
- As a result, ISAC announced that the Start-Up formula for the 2025-26 academic year would be adjusted to remain at the current FY25 level, maintaining the FY25 4% reduction factor
- As a result, FY26 annual MAP awards are being calculated with a 4% reduction factor
 - The effective maximum annual award for 2025-26 was reduced from \$8,400 to \$8,064
- The maximum annual award amount set by the revised MAP Start-Up Formula continues to be an estimated amount based on analysis and projections
- The FY26 MAP Recompute Formula is on the agenda for approval at the June 26, 2025 Commission Meeting
 - isac.org/about-isac/commissioners/2025-agenda-books/agenda-book-06-26-25.html

2025-26 ISAC Teacher Programs

- Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program.
 - March 1, 2025 was the priority application consideration date
 - Complete applications received after March 1 are considered only if available tuition waivers remain after all timely complete applicants have been awarded
 - Awarding will take place this week
- Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program
 - Online application is available in the ISAC Student Portal
 - March 31, 2025, was the priority application consideration date
 - A 2025-26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) or Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative Application) must also be submitted by March 31 for the application to be considered complete and timely
 - Complete applications received after March 31 will be considered only if MTI funding remains after all timely complete applicants have been awarded.

2025-26 Nursing Education Scholarships (NES)

- 2025-26 NES application is available in the ISAC Student Portal
- Application period was **March 1 through April 30, 2025**
 - Final date is a deadline date, not a priority date
 - The application process is not considered complete until the NES Application/Work Agreement/Promissory Note and a FAFSA or Alternative Application have been submitted to ISAC
- Applicants must re-apply each year, along with submitting a FAFSA or Alternative Application for the same award year
- The NES certification process will start soon

2025-26 ECACE Scholarship

- The 2025-26 ECACE Scholarship application was launched on March 31, 2025
- The application priority consideration date was Monday, May 19, 2025
- The application currently remains available, but will be taken down July 2
- After all timely renewal applicant's have been awarded, an applicant's proximity to completion of their program will be a factor in awarding to students who received ECACE in the 2023-24 award year
 - A timely applicant is one who submitted a **complete** application on or before May 19, including the 2025-26 FAFSA and other required documentation
 - A renewal applicant is one who was paid benefits in the previous award year
 - To be considered a renewal student for 2025-26, the student would have to have been paid ECACE benefits in 2024-25

2025-26 ECACE Scholarship

- Before awarding can take place, colleges must complete the certification process in ISAC's GAP Access system for each student record
- The certification process became available in early June
 - See the June 11 e-message for more details
 - isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0611.html
- For the certification process, colleges will indicate:
 - If a student meets program eligibility criteria (Yes or No)
 - If "No" is selected, they will be asked to select a reason why the student is considered ineligible
 - If the student was not paid benefits in 2024-25, the college will be asked if the student is close to completion of their program (Yes or No)
 - Close to completion is defined as 30 credit hours or less
 - Colleges will only have to provide this information for applicants who received ECACE Scholarship funds in years prior to 2024-25

Other Operational Activities Due

- **MAP Advising Data Collection**

- 2024 MAP Advising data was due **April 1, 2025**
- See January 7 E-Message
 - isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0107.html

- **Annual Budget Reporting**

- 2025-26 budget data is due June 1
 - If your school's annual budget is not final by June 1, the budget data is to be submitted with estimated figures, **followed by an e-mail from the financial aid director to School Services** that provides the approximate date by which the final budget will be submitted
 - All data must be provided or updated before payment processing begins in August
- See April 9 E-Message
 - isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0409.html

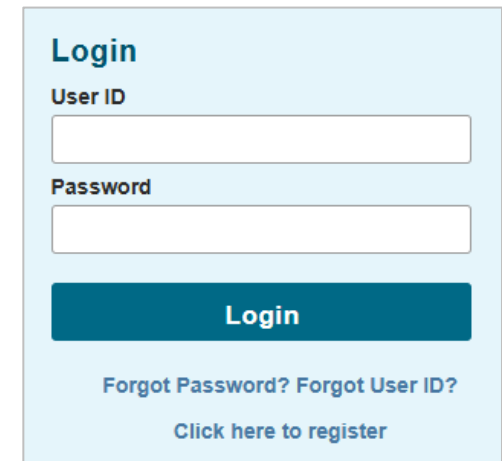
- **GAP Access User Verification**

- Complete by July 1, 2025
- Emails were sent to all financial aid directors who have a registered account in GAP Access asking them to complete the annual user verification process

GAP Access Security Enhancements

Password Resets

- As of February 26, 2025, all GAP Access passwords for Users, Administrators, and Primary Administrators must be changed every 30 days
- Passwords must be a minimum of eight characters, and include at least one upper-case letter, one lower-case letter, one numeric digit, and one special character {!@#\$%^&+=}
- GAP Access password resets can be completed via the GAP Access login
- by using the *Forgot Password/Forgot User ID* link on the Login page
 - If an account is in Active status and the user last changed their password over 30 days ago, they will be prompted to change their password upon logging in and will not be allowed to access data before it is changed.
 - To change a password, the user will need to provide the security question responses that were entered when first creating the GAP Access account.
 - Users that do not know their security question responses should contact School Services assistance.



The screenshot shows a light blue login form. At the top, the word "Login" is written in a dark blue font. Below it, there are two input fields: "User ID" and "Password". The "User ID" field is empty, and the "Password" field is also empty. Below the input fields is a dark blue button with the word "Login" in white. At the bottom of the form, there are two links: "Forgot Password? Forgot User ID?" and "Click here to register".

GAP Access Security Enhancements

Password Resets

- If a GAP Access user is locked out of their account and unable to reset their password, Primary Administrators and Administrators can provide a temporary password that allows the user to update their password
 - This function can be found on the *User Administration, Users View* screen in GAP Access
- To unlock a user, the Primary Administrators or Administrators would select the Key icon next to the user's name which will send a temporary password to the user that is locked out
 - After receiving the temporary password, the user can then set a new password upon logging into the GAP Access system
 - The user will be prompted to change their password as soon as they sign in and will not be allowed to access data before it is changed

User Administration

- Users View

Verify Users **Submit** School Setup Code A22c16633

Entries displayed 10 Filter

User ID	Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Name	Admin	Active	Primary	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	N	C		[Phone] [Key] [Person] [Trash]

GAP Access Security Enhancements

GAP Access User Accounts Will Be Locked after 60 Days of Inactivity

- Also effective as of February 26, 2025, any GAP Access account that is not accessed for a period of 60 consecutive days will be locked.
- Primary Administrators days are able to reactivate accounts that have been locked due to inactivity for 60 days by following the same steps taken to activate new accounts
- If the Primary Administrator has been locked out of their account, they will need to contact ISAC's School Services for assistance.

GAP Access Security Enhancements

Annual User Agreement

- Once a user has successfully completed the two-factor authentication and has logged into GAP Access, they will be presented with the GAP Access Data Security and Data Protections Annual Review agreement
- The user must review and select that they agree with the terms to proceed
- Following the submission of the user agreement, the user will receive e-mail verification that they have reviewed and agreed to the policies, and a copy of the policies will be provided for the user's records
- Once this process is completed, the user will not see this screen again until it is time to endorse the agreement again the next year
- Note: ISAC will soon be asking Primary Administrators to complete the annual User Verification process to certify that all users listed for their institutions are valid, active users

Annual User Verification of GAP Access Accounts

Dear Colleague:

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) annually requires the Primary Administrator at each institution to review the list of staff members at your school who have user accounts in the Gift Assistance Programs (GAP) Access portal to ensure that they are still in need of having an account and that their access level is current and correct.

This message is to announce that the annual User Verification process has been activated on the "User Administration" screen in GAP Access, and ISAC is asking that this process be completed **by July 1, 2025**.

Please review the list of users at your institution and make any necessary changes, such as updating or revising access levels and deleting user accounts that are no longer needed.

For example, if an employee has "Update" access, but their job no longer requires that level of access, you may need to change their level of access to "View," or if they no longer work with a particular program, you would remove their access to that program. For users who should no longer be on the list, their accounts can be deleted by clicking on the trash can icon associated with that user.

Once the review is complete and all changes to user accounts have been made, click the "Verify Users" checkbox at the top of the User Administration screen. Then, click the "Submit" button to send the information to ISAC.

Your timely attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we ask that you please complete this process **no later than July 1, 2025**. If you are no longer the Primary Administrator, please notify School Services as soon as possible so we can establish appropriate access for the new Primary Administrator.

Because keeping student data safe and secure is a critical responsibility of both ISAC and its partner institutions, failure to comply with the annual User Verification requirement will be considered an ISAC Program Review finding.

For more guidance on the User Verification process, refer to the [GAP Access User Verification Guide](#) on the ISAC Gift Assistance Programs (GAP) Access section at isac.org.

Questions may be directed to School Services by sending an e-mail message isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov or calling 866-247-2172.

ISAC Calendar

- July Webinars for FAAs
 - Tuesday Training, July 8 at 10 a.m.
 - Topic: Start-Up and Administration of 2025-26 ISAC Programs
 - Monthly Program & Operational Update, July 30 at 2 p.m.
- Commission Meeting
 - Thursday, June 26 at 1 p.m.
- Executive Briefing Call (to report on Commission Meeting)
 - Friday, June 27 at 11 a.m.
 - isac.org/e-library/partner-e-messages-and-newsletters/faa-e-messages/eLibrary-FAA-2025-0620.html

ISAC's Student Engagement & Support Services

For inquiries from students, parents, and the general public

Phone: **800-899-ISAC** (4722)

Fax: 847-831-8549

E-mail: isac.studentservices@illinois.gov

Spanish-speaking counselors are available

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

ISAC's Partner Services Department

Provides program information, policy guidance, training and support to colleges, high schools and other ISAC partners

Phone: **866-247-2172**

Fax: 847-831-8549

E-mail: isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

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Questions?



Thank you for attending today!