



For Immediate Release
November 10, 2014

Contact: Lynne Baker
847.831.8024
Lynne.Baker@ISAC.illinois.gov

ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ENCOURAGES MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STATE AND FEDERAL EDUCATION BENEFITS

DEERFIELD, ILLINOIS – One of the many ways the State of Illinois can serve and support its military service members and veterans is by providing educational benefits that provide those who serve and protect us with the support they need to go—or return—to college. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), the state agency committed to making college more affordable and accessible for Illinois families, can assist our service members in accessing the variety of grant and scholarship opportunities available to them to help make college a reality.

“Our service members, veterans and their families make a tremendous sacrifice for us,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of ISAC, “so we want to make sure that they are aware of all the educational benefits available and can take full advantage of them.”

The [Illinois Veteran Grant](#) (IVG) covers tuition and mandatory fees for qualified applicants attending public universities or community colleges in the state for a period that is equivalent to 4 years of full-time enrollment, including summer terms. The [Illinois National Guard \(ING\) Grant](#) pays college tuition and certain fees for eligible applicants attending Illinois community colleges and public universities. Both grants can be used in conjunction with federal GI benefits. Applications, detailed information on eligibility, and more is available on the ISAC [website](#).

There are numerous scholarship and grant opportunities available to the eligible dependents of service members and veterans. The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) administers the [MIA/POW scholarship](#), which can be used at most public colleges in Illinois, for eligible dependents of those declared to be a prisoner of war, missing in action, deceased as a result of a service-connected disability, or disabled with a 100 percent disability as the result of a service-connected cause. Eligibility and application details are available by contacting the IDVA.

Students attending the University of Illinois who are Illinois residents and whose mothers or fathers served in the U.S. Armed Forces during wartime may be eligible for a [Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver](#).

Numerous forms of financial aid for service members and their families are available at the federal level, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Visit Studentaid.gov and Todaysmilitary.com for more information.

Finally, ISAC administers a variety of state grant and scholarship programs for Illinois residents that Illinois service members and veterans should consider in planning for college. The most widely used of those programs is the [Monetary Award Program](#) (MAP), the state's largest need-based grant program. Based entirely on financial need as determined through the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#), MAP grants can help pay tuition and fees at many colleges and universities throughout the state. Because MAP is awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis and there is more demand than available dollars, applicants are encouraged to fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1st to determine eligibility and increase the opportunity to receive a grant.

“Studies show that by 2018, 64% of jobs in Illinois will require postsecondary education,” said Zarnikow. “Postsecondary education can not only improve potential career prospects and future salary, but also change levels of poverty, life expectancy, crime and obesity rates in our communities. Our goal at ISAC is to help ensure that veterans and their families have the information and resources they need to access the education they deserve.”

Questions on veterans' education benefits? Need help in getting through the financial aid process? Contact ISAC—call 800.899.ISAC (4722) or email us at isac.studentservices@isac.illinois.gov, attend a college [outreach event](#), or reach out to one of our [ISACorps members](#) for one-on-one mentoring and assistance. Local Veterans Service Officers, who can also help veterans to navigate the array of available programs and benefits, can be identified through the [IDVA](#). For questions on federal benefits, visit the [U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs \(VA\)](#), and for online access to individual VA benefits visit the VA's [ebenefits website](#).

About the Illinois Student Assistance Commission

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families--giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state's flagship Monetary Award Program and other scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers—totaling more than \$380 million in academic year 2013-14—ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. www.isac.org

###