



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GIVE THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME WITH A COLLEGE ILLINOIS!® 529 PREPAID TUITION PLAN
College Illinois! can help limit or even eliminate future student loan debt

CHICAGO – This holiday season you can give your children or grandchildren a present that will last them a lifetime — the gift of a college education. College tuition costs continue to rise and class of 2016 graduates who borrowed to finance their education have an average student loan debt of about \$37,000. But with a [College Illinois!® 529 Prepaid Tuition Plan](#), you can take a bite out of future college costs — and even eliminate the need to borrow — by prepaying for college at today's plan rates.

"We purchased College Illinois! for both of our children when they were very young. Our daughter and son have graduated from Eastern Illinois University and we can honestly say that both kids will have college degrees and are absolutely debt-free!" said Jerry Parks of Decatur. "This program was extremely easy to use and gives children the ability to pursue their dreams while keeping them and their parents off 'the poor farm.' I highly recommend College Illinois! for families that have the desire to see their little ones pursue college degrees."

Unlike a college savings plan, where the funds you have available to pay for the future cost of college will depend on how much you have saved and how well your investments have performed, College Illinois! offers a unique, tax-advantaged opportunity to buy something tangible *now* — semesters of college. The program allows you to *lock in the cost of college* when a child is still young so no matter how high tuition rates climb when your student is ready to attend college, you'll know tuition is covered for the schools in your plan. Plus, the value of College Illinois! benefits can be used at most private and out-of-state colleges as well.

College Illinois! makes it easy for relatives and friends to purchase a plan for a child or contribute to an existing College Illinois! Prepaid Tuition plan, and College Illinois! is a particularly attractive gift-giving option for grandparents. According to a [2012 AARP survey](#), of the 96 percent of grandparents who spend money on their grandchildren, 53 percent are assisting with educational costs.

In addition to helping limit future student loan debt for the beneficiary, as a qualified 529 plan, [College Illinois! offers significant tax benefits](#) for the purchaser:

- Illinois residents get a state tax deduction for contributions to the plan — up to \$10,000 a year for individuals and \$20,000 for couples filing jointly.

- On the federal and state level, earnings on contributions are tax-exempt as long as they are used to pay qualified educational expenses.
- Also, with certain limitations, there is a federal gift-giving exemption, making the program a great option for grandparents and other friends and family who would like to support a student's future college education.

[Gifting](#) by purchasing a new College Illinois! plan can be done online or by mail. To review plan and cost options, or to purchase a plan, visit collegeillinois.org. Or if you'd like to [contribute to an existing College Illinois! plan](#), follow our simple instructions and download a customizable gift certificate.

Since its inception, the program has helped more than 30,000 students pay for college and has paid out more than \$800 million in plan benefits. Give the gift of education to your loved one with College Illinois! — purchase a plan now before prices increase on most plans beginning January 18, 2017.

About College Illinois!

Since its inception in 1998, College Illinois! has been focused on providing an affordable option to help make college a reality for Illinois families. Administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the state's 529 prepaid tuition program offers a unique set of benefits, including tuition inflation protection, flexibility, and significant tax benefits. Program assets, which are held in the Illinois Prepaid Tuition Trust Fund and kept separate from other state public money or funds, are professionally managed by an experienced team led by a Chief Investment Officer and established third party asset managers. More information on plan options and benefits, as well as a complete description of terms and conditions of, and risks associated with the purchase of a contract, is available at <http://www.collegeillinois.org>.

The College Illinois! Prepaid Tuition Program cannot provide purchasers with legal or tax advice. Individual tax situations vary greatly. Purchasers should consult their tax advisor concerning federal and state tax implications of purchasing a contract.

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