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How Are Illinois Colleges and Universities Handling MAP Awards During the Budget Delay?
ISAC announces results of recent survey

As a result of the state's current budget delay, the Monetary Award Program (MAP), which last year provided approximately \$373 million a year in grants for low income college students, has not yet been funded for the 2015-16 school year. The unprecedented uncertainty for students, their families, and schools has led students, schools, policy makers, and the media to ask how higher education institutions throughout the state are handling this delay in funding.

To help answer these questions, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), which operates MAP on behalf of students, schools and the state, recently conducted a short voluntary survey of financial aid administrators at schools approved for the program. The following is a summary of some of the [survey](#) findings, which might suggest the potential impact on students and schools as we move into the spring semester without a budget and without MAP funding.

Survey findings should, however be viewed with caution. Out of the 133 MAP approved schools, 84 responded to the survey, and 71 schools identified themselves by sector. Of those 71 schools, 6 of 12 public universities responded to the survey, 28 of 48 community colleges responded, and 37 of 73 private institutions responded (including 3 of 9 proprietary schools surveyed). Please note that small survey populations such as this require nearly all participants to respond for valid and representative results. **Therefore, reporters citing data from the survey should qualify their statements so as not to presume that the survey data is an accurate representation of what all MAP-approved schools are doing.**

- **Almost half (49%) of survey respondents do NOT plan to credit student accounts¹ for MAP for spring term; as compared to what they did for fall term, fewer respondents are crediting MAP for spring term.** Forty-two percent of respondents indicated they did not credit MAP grants to student accounts for fall term, and nearly half (49%) say they won't credit it for spring term;

¹ Some respondents who answered affirmatively to the question, "Are you planning to credit MAP grants to student accounts for the second term?," indicated that they were not necessarily *disbursing* funds to student accounts, but were listing those funds as pending financial aid. While allowing the student to register and take classes, these schools may plan to adjust student accounts based on the actual amount of MAP funding a student receives.

another 14% are still undecided. Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated they credited MAP grants fall term, as compared to just 37% who say they are planning to do so for spring term.

- **From a sector perspective, the six public university respondents say they will credit MAP; most community college respondents (75%) have said they won't, and a large proportion (41%) of responding private institutions have also said they will not be crediting MAP.** Another 24% of private institution respondents reported they are undecided on what they will do about MAP grants for the second term.
- Even with regard to the 31 respondents that said they ARE crediting MAP, there is still substantial uncertainty for students. **Several of those 31 respondents indicated that they would require students to pay the shortfall if MAP funding was ultimately reduced. More than half of the 31 respondents are undecided about making students pay the shortfall, and about whether a resulting unpaid balance would prevent a student from enrolling in a subsequent term, transferring or graduating.**

The [survey report](#) also includes data on whether schools are crediting full or partial MAP awards and whether they are disbursing or withholding expected refunds from other aid and/or loans. The report also includes a sampling of comments from respondents, some of which highlight the impact of the delay on schools and students—from eliminating MAP from student financial aid awards until further notice from the state, to students taking on additional loans to cover the cost of college.

Said one respondent: “My institution is not able to cover the MAP disbursement for either the fall or the spring semester . . . the neediest students are losing state funds that would have helped pay their educational expenses.”

For more general information on MAP and the impact of the budget delay on MAP, see the additional fact sheets, media advisories, and FAQs in the [Media Kit](#) on the ISAC newsroom.

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. 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 2014-15—ISAC can help students make those choices a reality.

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