ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

ISAC Operational Update and Program News

October 28, 2026



Agenda

- 2026-2027 Award Year Update
- Important Updates
- Questions

2026-2027 Award Year

Fiscal Year (FY) 2027



2026-27 Applications Available

Program	OPEN?	Priority Deadline for 2026-27
Monetary Award Program (MAP)	**Y***	ISAC is **suspending** the announcement of MAP awards for all students whose initial FAFSA® is received by FPS after **Thursday, April 23, 2026**
Displaced Energy Worker Dependent Transition Scholarship Program (DEWSP)	**Y**	**March 1, 2027** – Spring-term **June 15, 2027** – Summer-term
Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program	**Y***	Was **May 31, 2026** (Can still apply late but will only be considered after priority applications have been awarded)
Golden Apple (GA)	**Y**	**12/1/2026 Priority Deadline & 3/1/2027 Final Deadline –** Apply through the Golden Apple Foundation website.
Grant Programs for Dependents of Police-Fire-Correctional Officers (PFC)	**Y**	**March 1, 2027** – Spring-term **June 15, 2027** – Summer-term
Illinois National Guard Grant (ING)	**Y**	When made available each year, applications are submitted on a rolling basis, must apply w/ enough time for ISAC to review application for the term recipient wants benefits used for. Please note that there is an estimated 12-week processing time for applications.
Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)	**Y**	Same as ING above.
Nursing Education Scholarship (NES)	**N**	Was **May 31, 2026**
School Social Work Scholarship Formerly known as the Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program	**Y**	**October 31, 2026**
Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW)	**N**	Was **March 1, 2026**
Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program (TISP)	**Y***	Was **September 18, 2026** (Can still apply late but will only be considered after priority applications have been awarded)

Certifications

All Certification records must be completed, regardless of whether the school certifies a student as eligible or ineligible and regardless of whether the student is currently enrolled.

Any outstanding certifications for the following programs should be completed:

- **ECACE** – Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity
- **NES** – Nursing Education Scholarship
- **SETTW** – Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver
- **SSWS** – School Social Work Scholarship
- **TI** – Teachers of Illinois

General Payment Reminders

Making payment requests in GAP is two steps:

1. **Generating the request(s)** by filling out the required payment information.
2. **Submitting request(s)** by going to the Submit Payment Requests tab and clicking the term for payment, then clicking submit.

If a student has a “U” status on the Student List: Payment screen, this means a payment request has been generated but has not been submitted.

ECACE Payment Reminder

- When an ECACE recipient is enrolled for both Fall and Spring, schools should request only one disbursement per term.
- Only in the special circumstance outlined below should a single a single lumpsum disbursement of funds be requested:

Section 2751.40 Institutional Procedures c) ISAC shall disburse funds in two or three installments, depending on the number of terms financed by the scholarship.

Multiple disbursements shall not be required in cases where the applicant's eligibility is not determined until the final term of the academic year for which the scholarship is being awarded or when a student is attending only one term and the maximum award does not exceed the student's cost of attendance.

MAP – First-term Payment Open

Payment for Fall Term (first-term) MAP is available as of Monday **August 24, 2026**.

- The 2026-27 maximum award amount is $8,064.
- Payment Request Deadline date for the Fall (first-term) term: on or before **December 4, 2026.**
- See the August 24 e-message for more details.

MAP Payment Request Overview in GAP

Payment can either be completed using the File Transfer Process (FTP) or in GAP Access.

Within the MAP system, the payment request process involves **two distinct steps**:

1. **Payment Generation** – which involves identifying student records for payment and indicating their enrollment hours/status
2. **Submitting Payment Requests** – which sends the identified records to ISAC for processing

Student Payment List: View Screen

From the **Student Payment List: View** screen the process of generating payment requests in completed in one of two ways:

1. Individually, by student
2. In batches, or groups, of students together.

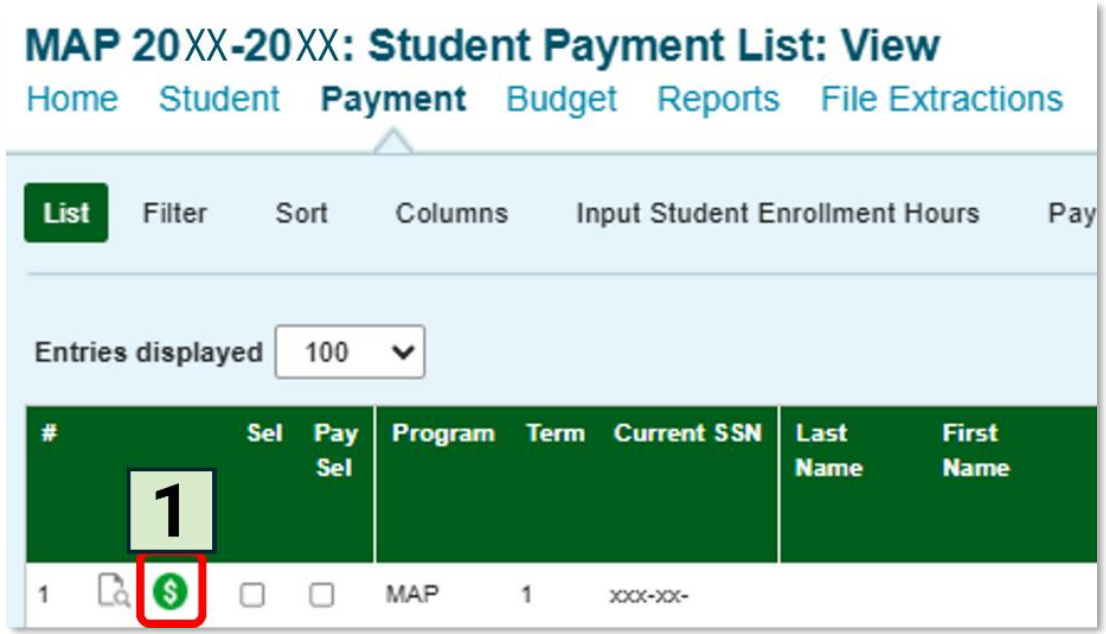
Individual Payment Requests (1/6)

To make an individual payment request:

1. From the Payment tab, click the green dollar icon next to the desired student.

2. The Student Detail: Payment screen will appear. To navigate to a different student, the “Current SSN” field can be edited and then select “Go”.

3. The Transaction ID section defaults to the most recent ISIR. To select a different Transaction ID, use the drop-down and then click “Go”.



Individual Payment Requests (2/6)

4. From this screen, the following fields should be addressed:

   a. **MAP Code** – This field shows the current MAP budget code that the student will be requested under.

   b. **Request** – select the type of request that must be generated:

      - Payment – to request a payment.
      - Cancel – to cancel a previously requested award.
      - Hold – prevents the record from being submitted.
      - Delete – to remove the payment request before submitting.

Individual Payment Requests (3/6)

c. **Enrollment Hours** – input the students' enrollment hours.

- Maximum of 15 and a minimum of 3.
- Equivalent of 15 credit hours required to receive the maximum award amount.
- The field length is up to five positions to accommodate a fraction of an hour.
- Do not enter the decimal unless there is a fraction of an hour.
    - For example, 10 hours would simply be entered as 10, whereas 9 ½ hours would be entered as 9.5 or 9.50.
- **Semester Schools** – For semester schools, any fractions of hours entered will be rounded up from .5 and down from .49 before the award is calculated.
    - For example, hours entered as 9.5 would be rounded up to 10 and 9.25 would round down to 9.
- **Quarter Schools** – Quarter schools must enter enrollment hours based on their method of tracking enrollment hours. ISAC will convert the hours to MAP Paid Credit Hours using the conversion factor previously provided to the school.
    - Results from the conversion will then be rounded up from .5 and down from .49. See examples in Quarter School Enrollment Hours Conversion Chart.

Quarter School Enrollment Hours Conversion Chart

For Quarter Schools	Enrollment Hrs. Entered		Conversion Factor		Converted Enrollment Hrs.		Rounded to (and used for the award calculation)
3.3 conversion factor	1.25	x	3.3	=	4.125	=	**4**
1.1 conversion factor	6.9	x	1.1	=	7.59	=	**8**
0.66 conversion factor	5.5	x	0.66	=	3.63	=	**4**

Individual Payment Requests (4/6)

d. **Short-Term Certificate Program** – this box should be checked to indicate if some or all a MAP award will be used for a credit-based Occupational or Career and Technical Certificate program at a public institution and it is a program that is not currently eligible for federal Title IV financial aid.

e. **Requested Amount Override** – this field auto populates with the maximum available award. If a reduced award is to be requested, the box should be checked next to the amount, and the award amount should be adjusted. The two sections below this can be used to help determine the maximum award amount available. **Colleges must ensure that a student does not receive a MAP award that exceeds the amount of tuition and mandatory fee charges that the student is being assessed.**

- **Current Eligible amount** – this is the current maximum amount a student is eligible.
- **Original Eligible amount** – the previous amount a student was eligible based on previous ISIR transactions.

f. **User Defined** – Sets a value for the User Defined Field for payment this request. This must be populated with 1 character – alphanumeric. This can represent anything the user defines and is simply a field for record keeping, marking specific students with certain payment circumstances or it can be left blank.

Individual Payment Requests (5/6)

g. **Dependent Residency Override** – This is used when a school determines that a dependent student meets the Illinois residency requirement in the most recent General Provisions Rules. This is intended to address situations for dependent students with divorced or separated parents who reside in Illinois with a parent who is also an Illinois resident, but the student was required to list an out-of-state parent contributor on the FAFSA. Checking the box will override the MAP disqualify code that will appear in the MAP system for dependent students whose parent contributor does not report Illinois as their state of residence on the FAFSA.

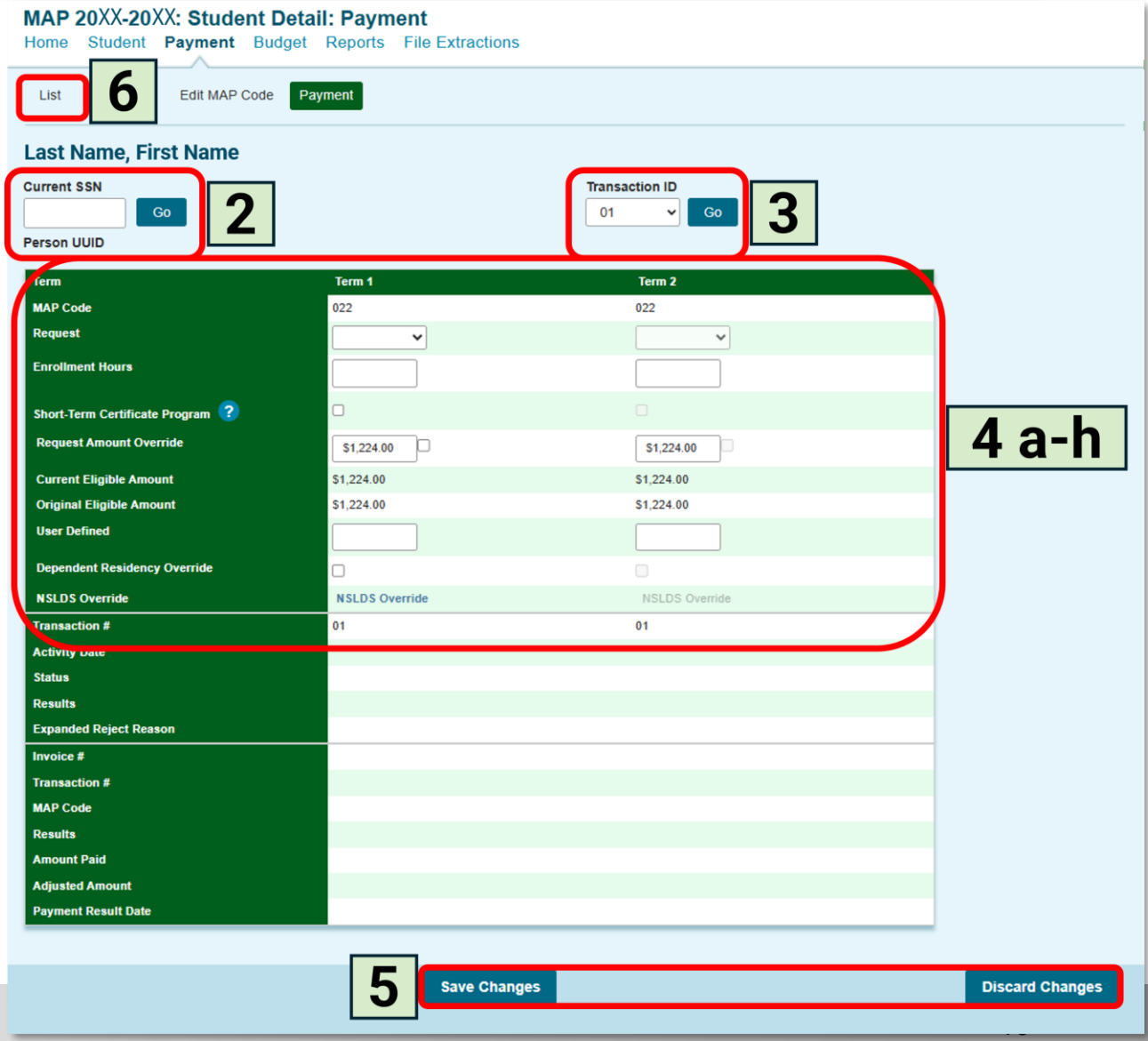
h. **NSLDS Override** – By checking MAP Default Release box you are confirming that the school obtained verification of the student's eligibility for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) in accordance with 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Section 2700.40 General Applicant Eligibility Requirements. Documentation received from each guarantor or holder of the loans(s) listed with the default status code as reported by the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) is on file and will be provided to ISAC upon request.

Individual Payment Requests (6/6)

5. After completing the needed fields above, click **Save Changes** or **Discard Changes**.

6. Repeat this process for each individual student payment request needed.

7. Payments must be submitted to complete the process. Click List to return to the **Student Payment List: View** screen. Follow the steps in the Submitting Payment Requests section.



Batch Payment Requests (1/5)

To input student information needed to generate multiple student payment requests:

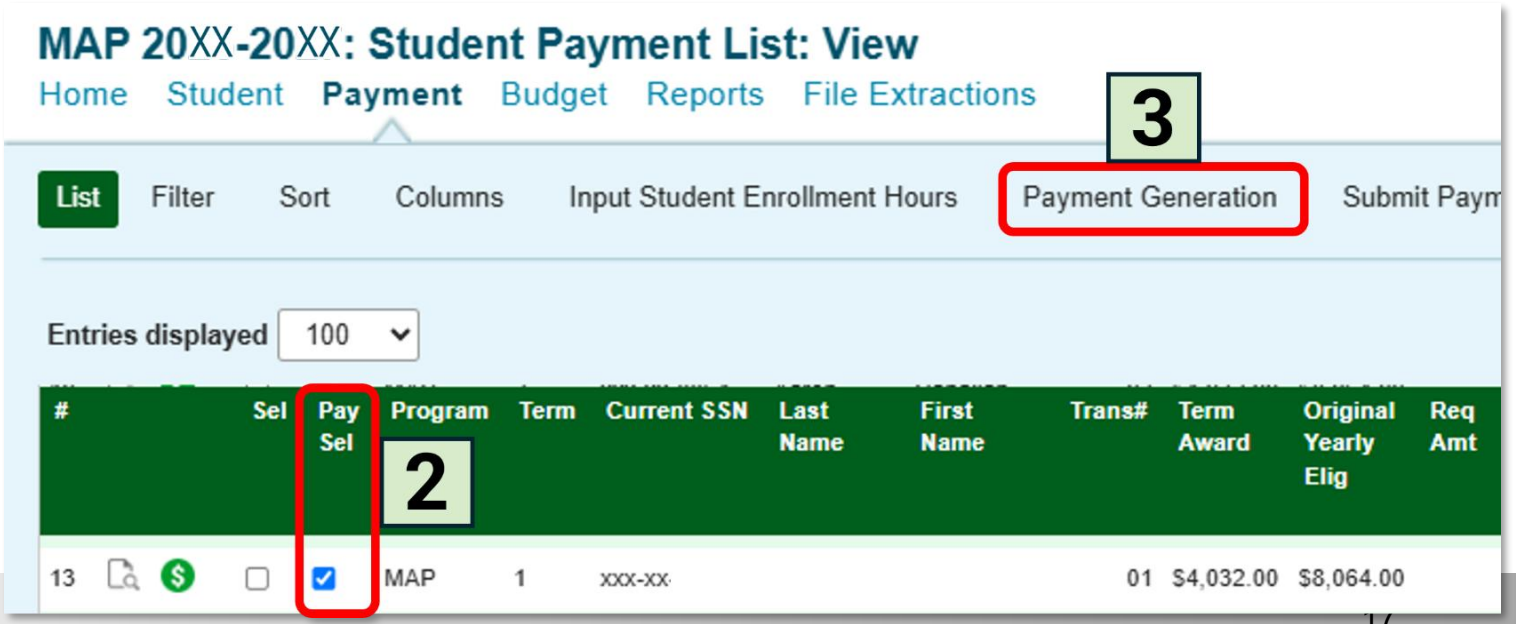
1. Click on the **Payment** tab in the MAP program.

2. Next to each student that will be included in the batch payment request, click the **Pay Sel** checkbox next to the students' names.

   a. **Note** – The Filtering and Viewing Options can be used to generate lists of specific students to help with this process.

3. Click on the **Payment Generation** tab

4. Select the **Term** from the drop-down menu. This sets the term the payment request is being made for ALL students in this request. Defaults to 1 and only options that are open for payment and that apply to this school are shown.



Batch Payment Requests (2/5)

5. If needed, select the appropriate **MAP Code** from the drop-down. This sets the MAP Code for ALL students you in this request. Defaults to the Main MAP Code. For schools with only 1 MAP code, this field cannot be changed.

6. The **Request** drop-down allows you to select the Payment option.
   - Only payment and cancellations can be made from this screen.
   - Holds and Deletes can only be completed using the Individual Payment Request method.
   - This prevents accidental payment cancellations.

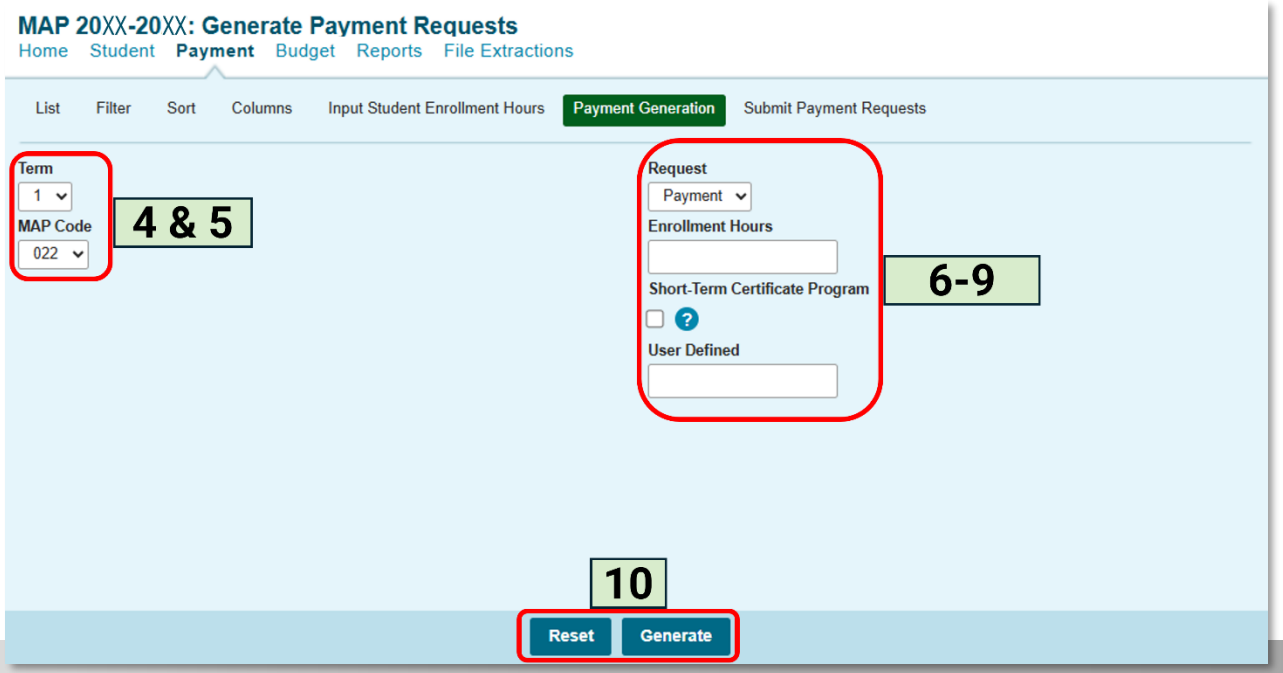
7. **Enrollment Hours** input the students' enrollment hours (see more information on this slide).

Batch Payment Requests (3/5)

8. The **Short-Term Certificate Program** checkbox sets whether payment requests are marked to be part of a Short-Term Certificate Program for this batch of student requests.

9. **User Defined** – Sets a value for the User Defined Field for payment this request. This must be populated with 1 character – alphanumeric. This can represent anything the user defines and is simply a field for record keeping, marking specific students with certain payment circumstances or it can be left blank.

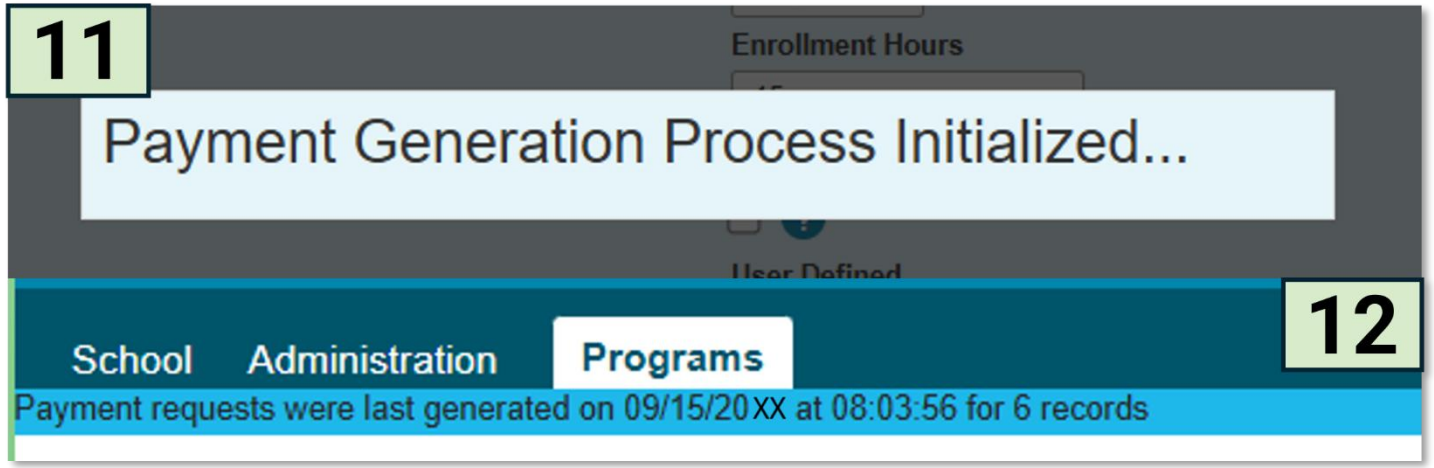
10. After all information is entered, click **Generate** top create the payment requests. Click **Reset** to reset the fields.



Batch Payment Requests (4/5)

11. A notice will appear stating that the “**Payment Generation Process Initialized”**.

12. Once the process is completed, a blue banner will appear beneath the main GAP tabs that will state, “**Payment request were last generated on 00/00/0000 for X records**”.

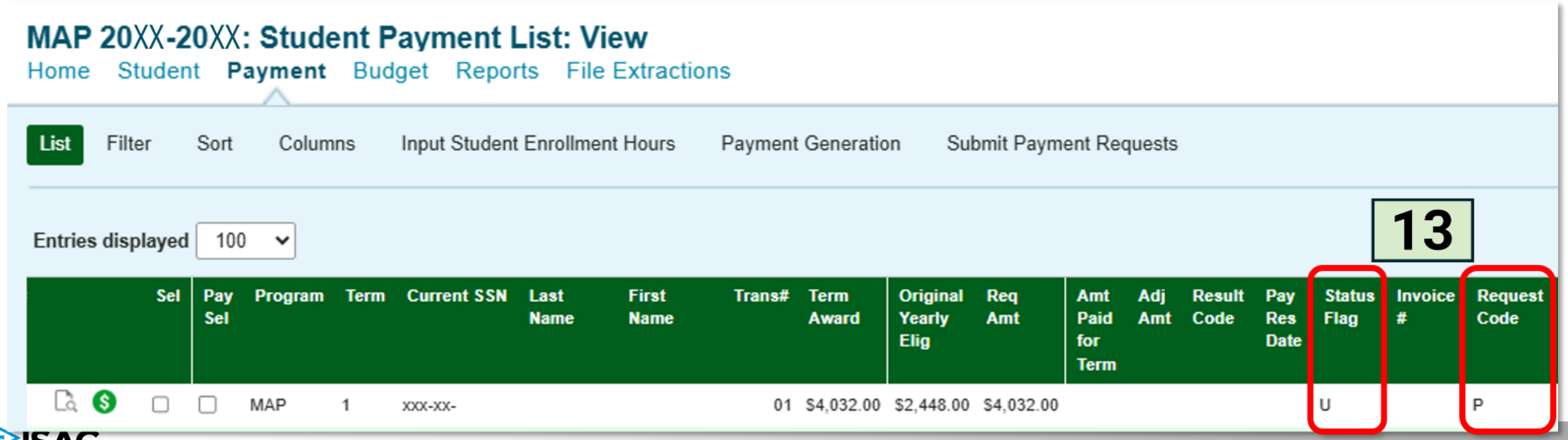


Batch Payment Requests (5/5)

13. Records created will now appear on the Student Payment List: View screen with the Status Flag U – Update and a Request Code to match the request submitted.

14. The final step of the process is submitting the request. See the Submitting Payment Requests.

    Payment requests are not processed until they are submitted.

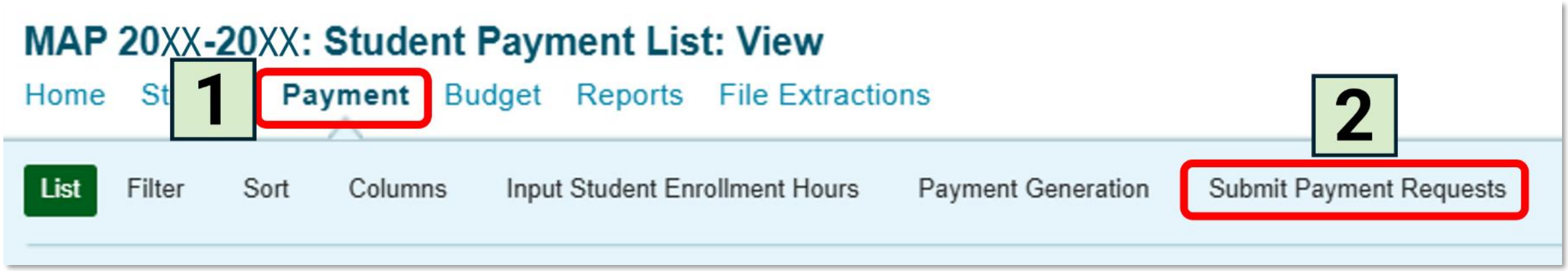


Submitting MAP Payment Requests (1/3)

After generating payment requests using either the Individual or Batch payment request generation process, payment requests must be submitted to complete the process.

1. In the MAP program, click the **Payment** tab. The **Student Payment List: View** screen displays.

2. Click on the **Submit Payment Request** subtab.



Submitting MAP Payment Requests (2/3)

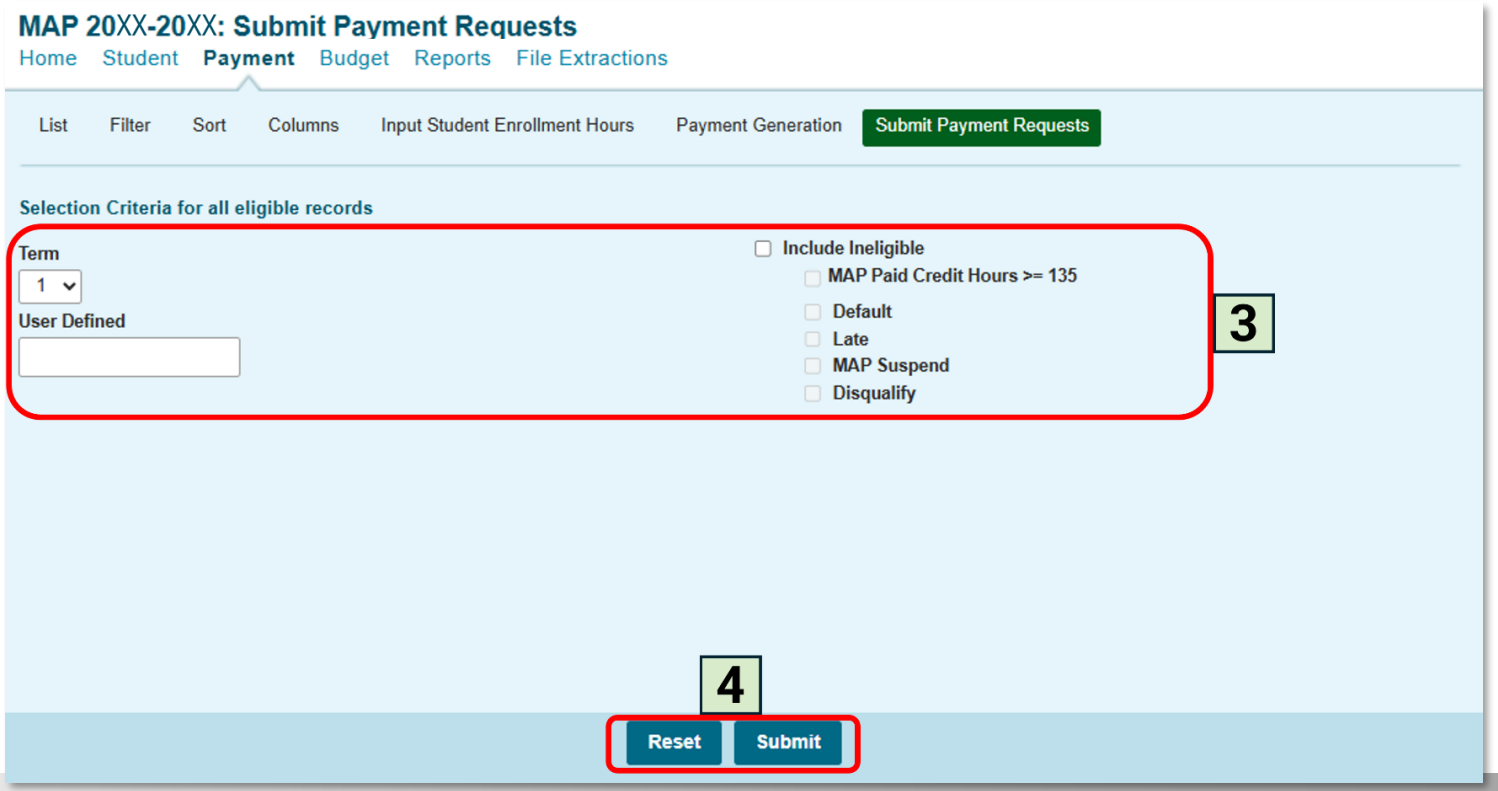
3. Select the following items if needed:

   a. **Term** – the term for which payment is being requested.

   b. **User Defined Criteria** – if this is used only records with the indicated user defined criteria that was added to the student record will be submitted.

   c. **Include Ineligible** – this can be used in the case where a student may have a Disqualify code 1 (Dependent student, parents NOT Illinois residents) and a dependency resident override has been selected. This could alternatively be used if a school wishes to track ISAC's rejection of payment for the indicated ineligible records.

4. Click **Submit** to submit payment requests or click reset to remove selections



FTP Payment Request Process (1/3)

To use the FTP process:

1. Schools create a 160-byte flat file. The 160-byte flat file used to exchange MAP data is simply a text file. It can be created with Notebook or Microsoft Word or any other program that can create a flat file that has 160 columns across each row. Each row accounts for each individual record. Every column or set of columns should contain a specific data element and will be populated depending on the use of the file.

    a. The most recent MAP 160 Byte File Layout Specification can be found in the Electronic Tools section of the ISAC website. These should be reviewed while preparing a file for uploading.

    b. The different record types that are used are as follows:

        - **4** – MAP payment requests and cancellations submitted for processing
        - **5** – MAP payment results based on submitted requests
        - **6** – MAP Cumulative results
        - **7** – Eligibility Status records

FTP Payment Request Process (2/3)

2. After populating the file with data, it is important that the 160-byte file be saved as a text file and that the file name has the extension of .txt.

    a. **Example: mappayreq_999_010111.txt**

3. Next, copy the file to ISAC's secure FTP site. Files do not need to be encrypted or password protected. To access ISAC's FTP site see: **https://transfer.isac.org/**

4. Log in using your GAP Access credentials. If a user needs to gain access to the FTP site, see the MAP Eligibility & Payment User Guide in the Program Access & Privileges section.

5. Locate the MAP Subfolder.

FTP Payment Request Process (3/3)

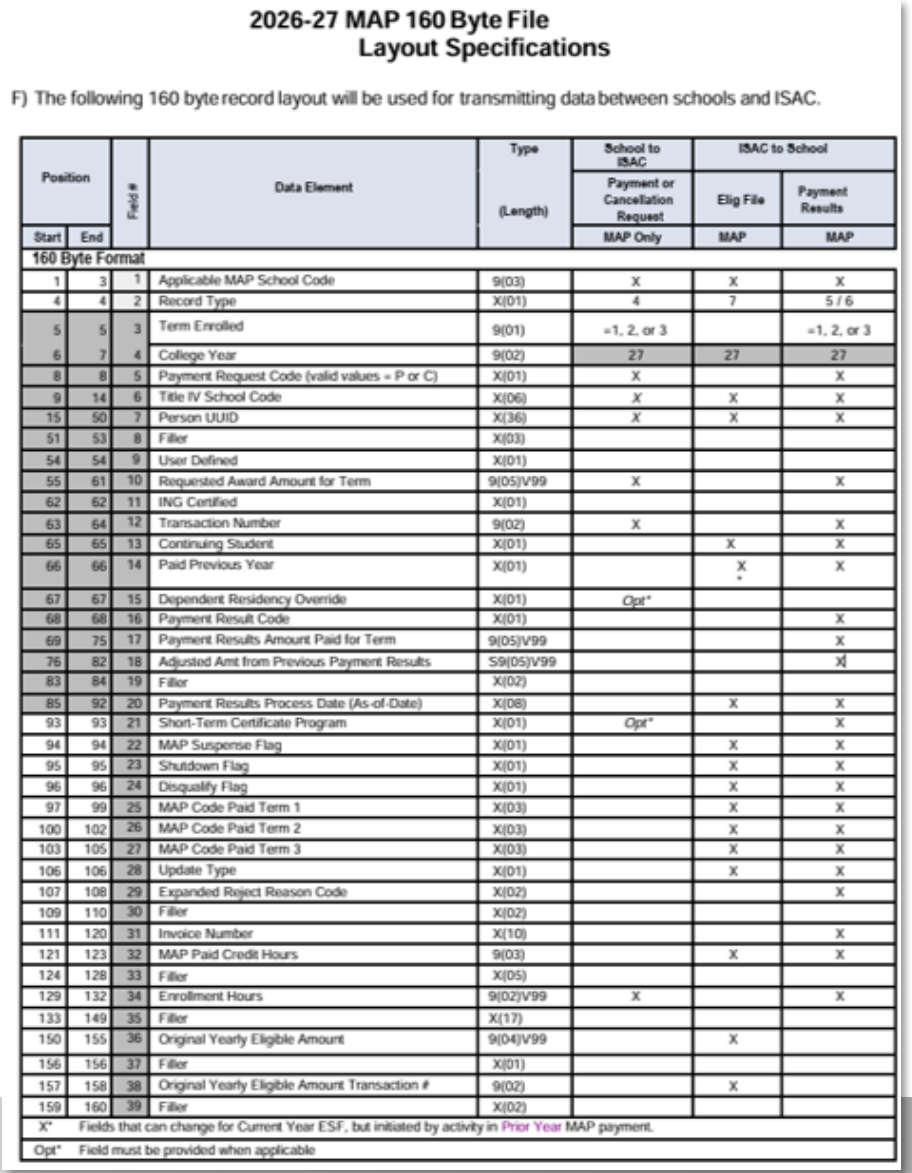
6. Copy the file from where it was created on the local computer files to the **/MAP/IN** folder on the FTP site. There are three different methods to transfer the file. Choose the one you prefer:

   a. Double-click the file in the left pane.

   b. Single-click the file in the left pane to highlight it. Then drag and drop the file to the right pane.

   c. Right-click the file in the left pane and select Upload.

7. Once the file is transferred, close the browser tab or log out of the FTP site.



2026-27 MAP 160 Byte File Layout Specifications

F) The following 160 byte record layout will be used for transmitting data between schools and ISAC.

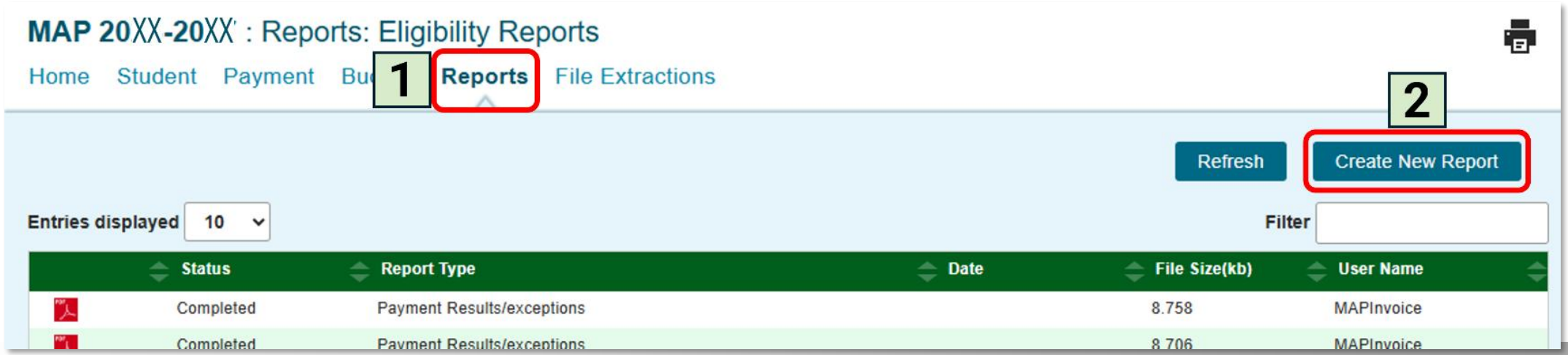
Position Start	Position End	Field #	Data Element	Type (Length)	School to ISAC: Payment or Cancellation Request (MAP Only)	ISAC to School: Elig File (MAP)	ISAC to School: Payment Results (MAP)
160 Byte Format							
1	3	1	Applicable MAP School Code	9(03)	X	X	X
4	4	2	Record Type	X(01)	4	7	5 / 6
5	5	3	Term Enrolled	9(01)	=1, 2, or 3		=1, 2, or 3
6	7	4	College Year	9(02)	27	27	27
8	8	5	Payment Request Code (valid values = P or C)	X(01)	X		X
9	14	6	Title IV School Code	X(06)	X	X	X
15	50	7	Person UUID	X(36)	X	X	X
51	53	8	Filler	X(03)			
54	54	9	User Defined	X(01)			
55	61	10	Requested Award Amount for Term	9(05)V99	X		X
62	62	11	ING Certified	X(01)			
63	64	12	Transaction Number	9(02)	X		X
65	65	13	Continuing Student	X(01)		X	X
66	66	14	Paid Previous Year	X(01)		X *	X
67	67	15	Dependent Residency Override	X(01)	Opt*		
68	68	16	Payment Result Code	X(01)			X
69	75	17	Payment Results Amount Paid for Term	9(05)V99			X
76	82	18	Adjusted Amt from Previous Payment Results	S9(05)V99			X
83	84	19	Filler	X(02)			
85	92	20	Payment Results Process Date (As-of-Date)	X(08)		X	X
93	93	21	Short-Term Certificate Program	X(01)	Opt*		X
94	94	22	MAP Suspense Flag	X(01)		X	X
95	95	23	Shutdown Flag	X(01)		X	X
96	96	24	Disqualify Flag	X(01)		X	X
97	99	25	MAP Code Paid Term 1	X(03)		X	X
100	102	26	MAP Code Paid Term 2	X(03)		X	X
103	105	27	MAP Code Paid Term 3	X(03)		X	X
106	106	28	Update Type	X(01)		X	X
107	108	29	Expanded Reject Reason Code	X(02)			X
109	110	30	Filler	X(02)			
111	120	31	Invoice Number	X(10)			X
121	123	32	MAP Paid Credit Hours	9(03)		X	X
124	128	33	Filler	X(05)			
129	132	34	Enrollment Hours	9(02)V99	X		X
133	149	35	Filler	X(17)			
150	155	36	Original Yearly Eligible Amount	9(04)V99		X	
156	156	37	Filler	X(01)			
157	158	38	Original Yearly Eligible Amount Transaction #	9(02)		X	
159	160	39	Filler	X(02)			

X* Fields that can change for Current Year ESF, but initiated by activity in Prior Year MAP payment.

Opt* Field must be provided when applicable

MAP Reports

1. Schools will find rejected payment requests along with all other payment results on the **Payment Results Summary/Invoice Detail** report in the **MAP Reports: Eligibility Reports** area via GAP access in the MAP Program system.
   - No separate notification will be sent.
2. Additional reports (Payment Results, Payment Exceptions, Request Not submitted, etc.) can also be created by clicking the “Create New Report” button.



MAP Payment Result Codes/ Payment Reject Codes

- For a full list of codes to determine why a student was not paid or payment was rejected see pages 59-60 of the MAP Eligibility & Payment User Guide.
- If the issue cannot be resolved or you have questions, reach out to Partner Services.

Payment Reject Codes

Code	Description
1	Data edit error. *MAP rejections for a MAP Payment Reject Code 1 are further defined by the following Expanded Reject Reason codes: • **1E** – MAP Payment request code (field 6) is invalid; not "P" or "C" or is blank. OR Enrollment hours field does not contain valid number of hours or is blank. • **1L** – School Code (field 1) is a non-approved MAP school code. • **1S** – SAR/ISIR transaction (field 13) is invalid; is blank or not numeric. • **1T** – Term Enrolled (field 4) is invalid; is not "1", "2" or "3", is blank or not numeric. • **1U** – Requested award amount for term (field 11) invalid; is blank or not numeric. • **1V** – College Year (field 5) invalid; year provided not currently being process, is blank or not numeric.
2	On pre-edit file – SSN not on ISAC databases (Exception Report)
3	School code invalid; is blank or not numeric.
4	Request superseded by another request.

Payment Results Codes

Code	Description
*	Payment processed – no reported exception
B	Payment increased
C	Payment decreased
F	Full MAP Paid Credit Hours already used
H	Record previously paid to your school for requested term.
I	Payment reduced, amount claimed greater than term award
J	Ineligible for payment due to calculated award amount of zero
K	Ineligible for payment due to Stafford loan default status per NSLDS data.
M	Disqualified record for disqualified reason code listed
N	Record was previously paid to another school as listed for requested term.
P	Student not eligible for term requested. Application received after deadline date.
R	Payment reduced to maintain ISAC annual award amount limit.
S	Suspended MAP payment
T	With this payment, student attains 135 MAP Paid Credit Hours. Student will no longer be eligible for MAP payment.
U	Change in payment was requested; record indicates that no prior payment has been made for this term.
V	With this payment, student attains 75 MAP Paid Credit Hours. Student in no longer eligible for MAP payment at academic levels 1 and 2.
W	MAP Paid Credit Hours increased due to change in enrollment hours.
X	MAP Paid Credit Hours decreased due to change in enrollment hours.
Y	Held payment request – Late Claim.
Z	Held payment request – Insufficient funds available.

MAP Eligibility & Payment User Guide

The MAP Eligibility and MAP Payment User Guides have been combined into a single User Guide:

MAP Eligibility & Payment User Guide

For easy navigation, use the clickable table of contents.

There are also multiple internal links within the document to take users to relevant sections.

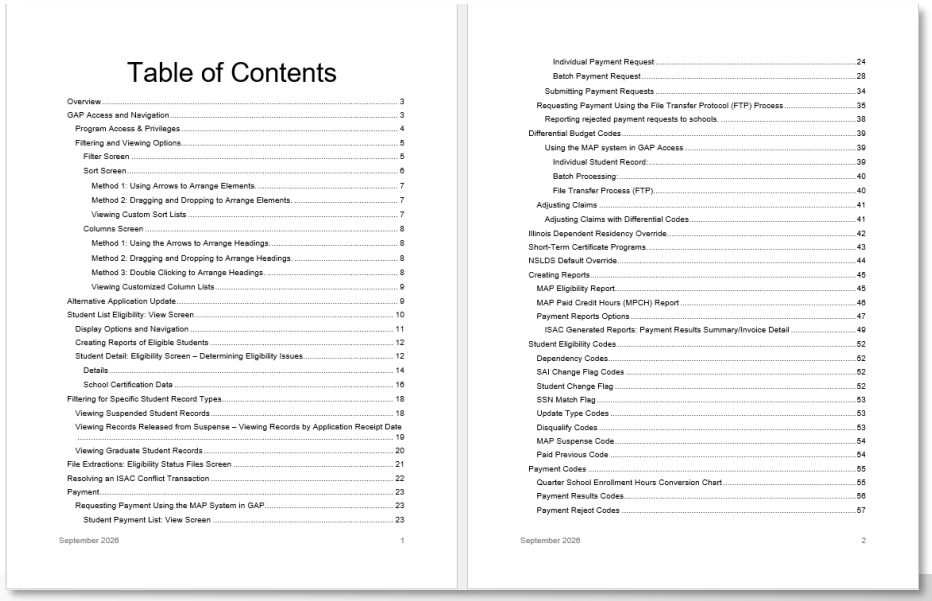
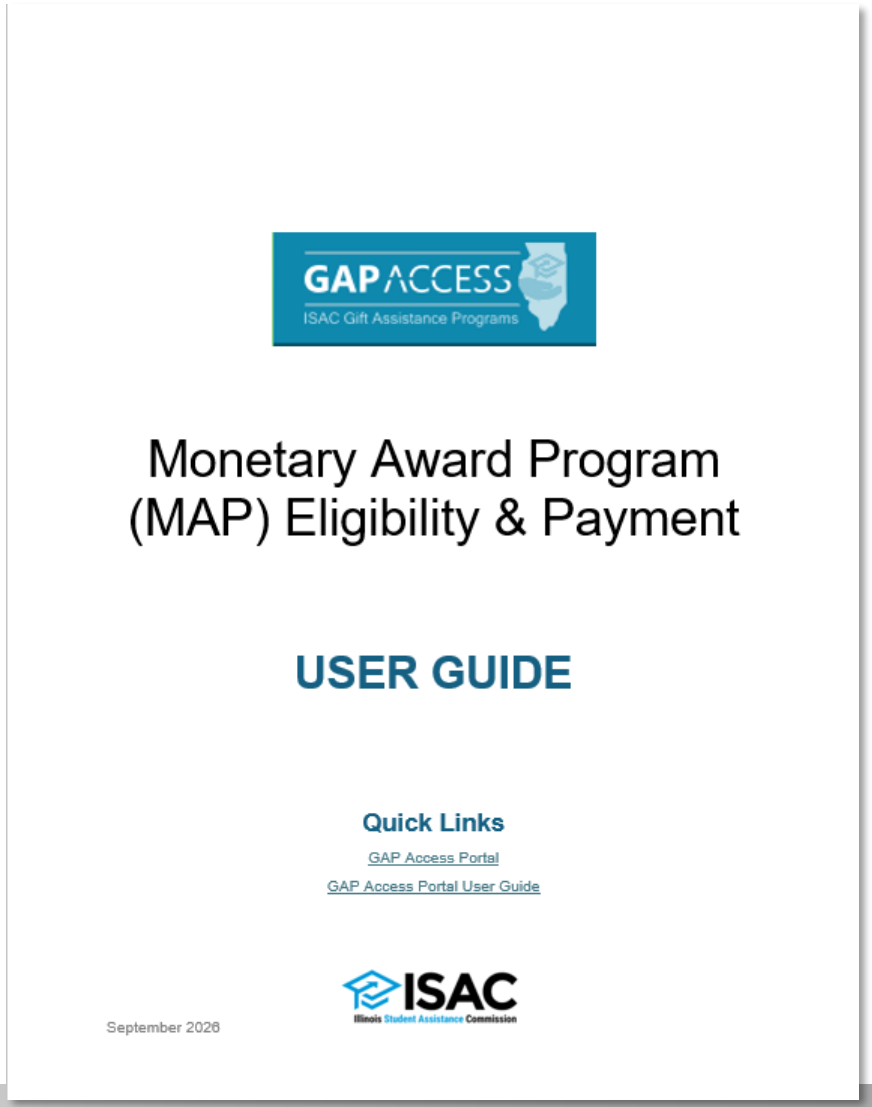


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GAP ACCESS
ISAC Gift Assistance Programs

Monetary Award Program (MAP) Eligibility & Payment

USER GUIDE

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Illinois Student Assistance Commission

September 2026

First-Term (Fall) Payment/Benefit Request Deadlines

The first-term payment/benefit request deadline for the following programs is **December 31, 2026**:

- Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (**ECACE**)
- Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois (**GA**)
- Illinois National Guard (**ING**) Grant
- Illinois Veteran Grant (**IVG**)
- Nursing Education Scholarship (**NES**)
- School Social Work Scholarship (**SSWS**)
- Teacher of Illinois (**TI**) Scholarship

Grant Programs for Police/Fire/Correctional Officers PFC

- Awarding has taken place & payment is currently available.
- Term 1 priority payment request deadline: **December 31, 2026**
- For more information and updates see the Grant Programs for Dependents of Police/Fire/Correctional Officers page.

GEAR UP – Update

The GEAR UP Scholarship is funded through a federal grant

- **Does not have administrative rules** like ISAC's other state-funded programs.
- Subject to ISAC's General Provisions (Part 2700) and the terms of the ISAC Program Participation Agreement (PPA).

Temporary Process: Fall payment will be completed through a manual system (spring will be online in GAP)

- Emails with instructions on how to complete Fall Payment requests were sent to schools' Financial Aid Directors on Friday, October 23.
    - Note: Subsequent rosters will be sent to schools as student information is processed.

GEAR UP – Manual Payment Request Process (1/2)

Schools with GEAR Up students have received an email from partner services containing:

- **Fall Student Roster**
- **Special Exceptions Form**

1. Determine the amount to be requested for each student and report it on the attached Roster:

Award Amount type	Description	Amount
Annual Scholarship Amount	Total amount that the student can receive for the academic award year (High School Class of 2026 Cohort, AY 2026-27). Will be divided between terms.	**$2,982.27**
Semester Term Scholarship Amount	Total amount for one semester term award. Use if requesting only the fall term, or if the student is attending only one term for the academic year.	**$1,491.13**
Quarter Term Scholarship Amount	For quarter schools request this amount per quarter.	**$994.09**
Lifetime Scholarship Amount	Full award amount that a student can receive under this program. Under special exceptions, a student may be able to receive the full lifetime award in one payment if the student is completing a one-year program. Once a lifetime scholarship has been paid, the scholarship for that student will be exhausted and no further payments can be made. If you have a student that meets these criteria, please complete the attached **Special Exceptions Form.**	**$5,964.55**

GEAR UP – Manual Payment Request Process (2/2)

2. If a student is missing their High School Graduation Date, add the date to the roster if available.

3. If a student does not meet the eligibility requirements below. Write the student's name and indicate their reason(s) on the provided space.

   - Is a high school graduate with a diploma or equivalent.
   - Is less than 22 years old at the time of first use of scholarship funds.
   - Is enrolled or planning to attend a state of Illinois school.

4. Sign and Date the roster.

   - **Acceptable** – digital or e-signature, hand-written and scanned signatures.
   - **Unacceptable** – typed signature.

5. Personal Contact – provide a reliable phone number and email.

6. Reply to the email with the completed roster and any special circumstance documents.

GEAR UP – Payment Request Guidance

- Written guidance is provided in the GEAR UP Program Guidance Document.
  - This guidance was emailed to Financial Aid Directors on Tuesday, October 27. (Shown on the next four slides)
  - Later this will be included in a full program User Guide accessible from ISAC's website once the program is developed in GAP.
- Any additional questions should be directed to Partner Services for resolution.

GEAR UP – Procedures (1/4)

- GEAR UP Scholarship is funded through a federal grant
  - **Does not have administrative rules** like ISAC's other state-funded programs.
  - Subject to ISAC's General Provisions (Part 2700) and the terms of the ISAC Program Participation Agreement (PPA).

Enrollment Verification

- Schools will verify a student's enrollment via the GEAR UP payment request process in GAP Access. For the Fall 2026 term, this process will use manual student rosters until the development is completed in GAP Access.
- No additional certification is required beyond verifying enrollment as part of the payment request.

GEAR UP – Procedures (2/4)

Payment Requests & Disbursement

- ISAC issues payments directly to institutions on behalf of students; disbursements will be tracked in GAP Access.
- Institutions may determine how best to apply the award, either by term or for the full academic year.
    - Please review the additional information on the Special Exceptions process for students that may be eligible to receive the Lifetime Scholarship amount in one academic year.

Allowable Education Expenses

- GEAR UP Scholarship funds are meant to be flexible and may be applied to:
    - Tuition and mandatory fees
    - Books, supplies, and required equipment
    - Costs of attendance
    - Other approved educational expenses as determined by the institution

GEAR UP – Procedures (3/4)

Packaging Guidance

- Aid restricted to tuition and fees (such as the MAP Grant or other ISAC programs) must be applied before GEAR UP Scholarship funds, which are more flexible.
- Institutions may issue a credit balance to a student if total financial aid exceeds direct tuition and fees, provided total aid does not exceed the student's cost of attendance.

Withdrawal, Refunds, and Return of Funds

- If a student withdraws during the 100% institutional refund period, all GEAR UP Scholarship funds must be returned to ISAC for potential use in a later term or academic year.
- If a student withdraws prior to the Title IV 60% completion point, the institution may use GEAR UP Scholarship funds to resolve any remaining balance owed by the student.
- If a student withdraws after the 60% point, the student may retain the funds.

GEAR UP – Procedures (4/4)

Adjustments and Unused Funds

- If a student does not use their full annual award within the academic year, institutions may adjust or cancel the remaining amount.
- Any unused funds remain available to the student for future terms within the six-year eligibility period.

Year-End Fiscal Reconciliation

- Institutions must reconcile GEAR UP Scholarship payments for each student as part of the annual GEAR UP fiscal reconciliation process. ISAC will communicate with the schools when this process opens.
- Please ensure accurate record-keeping and timely reporting to ensure compliance with federal grant requirements.

Resources – User Guides

For additional information on certification and payment processes for any of our programs, see the GAP Access webpage for access to our Program User Guides (scroll down to the GAP Access User Guides section).



Note: the most up-to-date user guides are posted on this page. Several user guides are currently in development and will be updated in the coming months. Stay tuned!

GAP Access User Guides

User Guides for all GAP Access functionality are below. General questions, user name and password maintenance, and technical information about GAP Access are answered in the Activating and Authentication User Guides.

- GAP Access Portal User Guide
- AIM HIGH Data Collection
- Budget Reporting Process User Guide
- Deceased, Disabled, and MIA-POW Veterans' Dependents Scholarship
- ECACE Scholarship Program User Guide
- Enrollment Status Verification for the Teacher Programs User Guide
- Golden Apple Scholars User Guide
- ING Grant User Guide
- IVG Program User Guide
- MAP Advising Data Collection User Guide
- MAP Eligibility & Payment User Guide
- MTI User Guide
- Nursing Education Scholarship (NES) User Guide
- PFC User Guide
- School Social Work Scholarship User Guide
- SETTW Certification Process User Guide
- Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program User Guide
- User Guide for High School Programs
  [includes guidance for Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative (FAACI), One Click College Admit (OCCA), & State Scholar Program (SSP)]

If you have a question about information that is not addressed in the Guides, contact a Partner Services Representative.

Illinois Workforce Pell Planning Survey

The Illinois Workforce Pell Steering Committee is seeking input from institutions to inform their approach to implementing Workforce Pell. The survey focuses on the following:

- Notification timeline
- Financial aid processing
- Marketing and recruitment
- Internal coordination
- Key deadlines

Take the Survey

Due October 30th

For more information see the October 26th e-message.

2027-28 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

- Available to be completed in the Student Portal.
- The Alternative Application provides a pathway for students who meet the provisions of the Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act to apply for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) and be considered for other Illinois financial aid programs.
- **Eligibility criteria to complete the Alternative Application has changed.**
- Students who are not eligible for federal financial aid, including undocumented students, should complete the *Prescreening Questionnaire* to determine if they are eligible to complete the application.
    - Data collected in the prescreening questions will be retained by ISAC and will not be shared with colleges.
    - Students with questions or who need assistance may contact ISAC's Student Engagement and Support Services or contact an ISACorps™ member in their area.
- The Financial Aid Planning area has resources to help students complete the financial aid process.

Important Updates



December 3: Next Commission Meeting

- Next meeting of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission is scheduled to take place at:

1:00 p.m. (CT) on Thursday, December 3, 2026

- Further details, including a listing of tentative agenda items, will be available prior to the meeting via the ISAC's Governing Board: The Commission section of the About ISAC area.
- The Commission Meeting Schedule page will soon be updated with information regarding all meetings scheduled in 2027.

Registration Available: ILASFAA Fall Workshop

Friday, November 13, 2026.

Elgin Community College

Registration Full

Monday, November 16, 2026.

Rend Lake Community College

Spots Available

ILASFAA
Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Serving Illinois Students Since 1969

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Check-in will be open from 8:30am until the workshop starts at 9:00am. Lunch will be included.

Cost: The registration fee is $65 for ILASFAA Members/$95 for Non-ILASFAA Members

Registration: You may register by clicking on the link here: Register for Workshop

The deadline to register is October 30, 2026.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to ILASFAA's Training and Professional Development Committee Co-Chairs Hannah Castellanos (hannah.castellanos@illinois.gov) or Katie Glascott (kglasco1@depaul.edu).

We hope to see you in November!

Holiday Schedule – ISAC Staff Unavailable



Election Day	Veterans Day	Thanksgiving
3rd	11th	26th - 27th

Upcoming Monthly Webinars

November	December	January
18th	16th	27th
@ 2 p.m.	@ 2 p.m.	@ 2 p.m.

Student Engagement & Support Services

For inquires from students, parents, and the general public:



800-899-ISAC (4722)



Isac.studentservices@illinois.gov

FAX 847-831-8549

Spanish-speaking counselors are available
8 a.m. – 4: 30 p.m. CT

ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

Partner Services Department

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

866-247-2172

Isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

FAX 847-831-8549

Partner Services Team

Hannah Castellanos	Hannah.Castellanos@illinois.gov
Sarah Dulay	Sarah.Dulay@illinois.gov
Hayle Mickelson	Hayle.Mickelson@illinois.gov
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ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

ISAC E-Messaging Sign Up

Our e-Messaging service will keep you informed and up-to-date on the Illinois Student Assistance Commission's programs and services. Our messages share ISAC programmatic and operational information and are not marketing in nature.

1. Choose the category from the list on the right that best describes you. Click on the link.
2. Fill in your Email, First Name, & Last Name.
3. Select one or more of the available Email Lists
4. Click "**Sign Up!**".

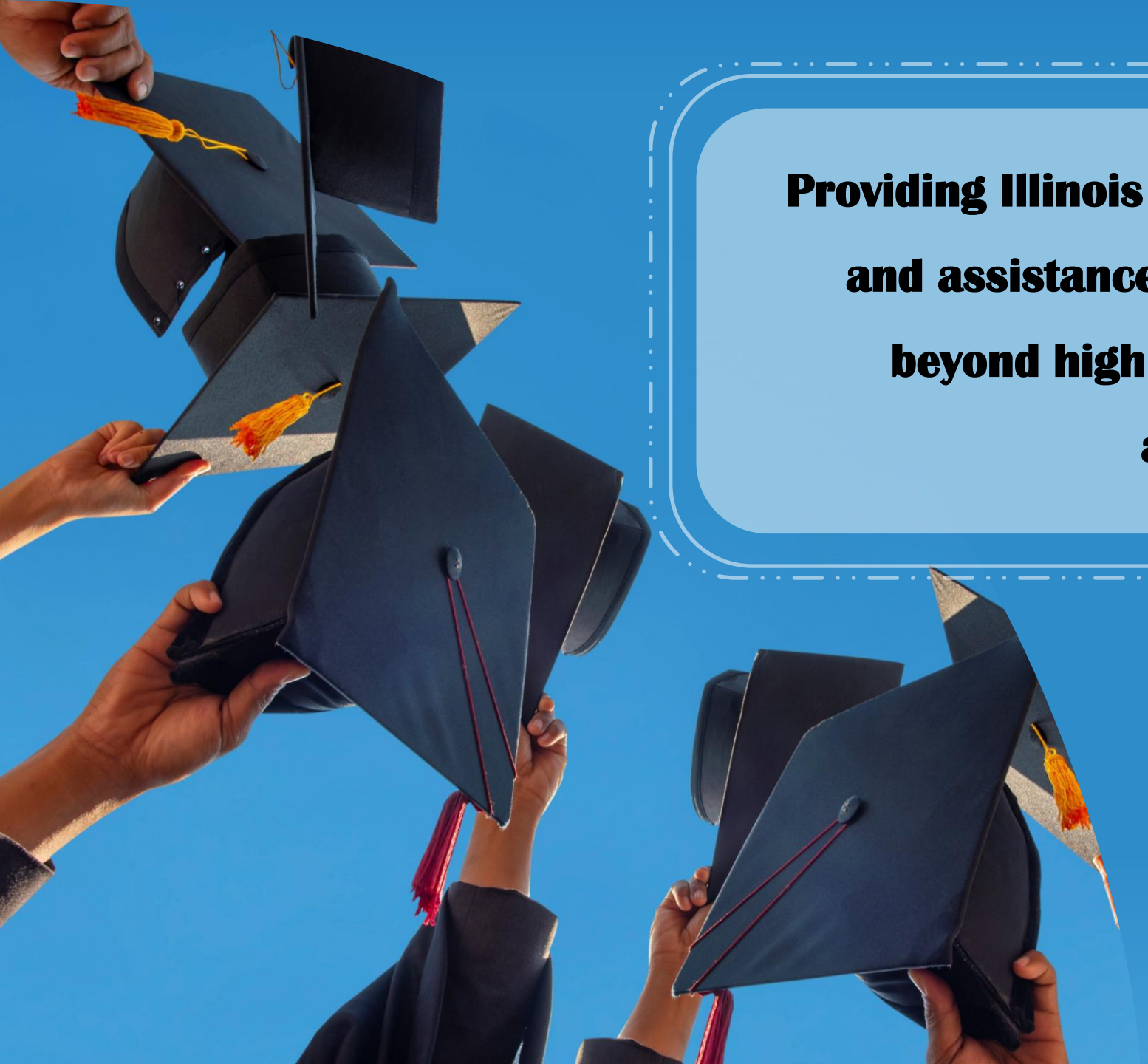
Student/Parents

Counselors

Community Partners

Financial Aid Administrators (FAAs)

ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission



Providing Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable.

ISAC
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