ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

ISAC Operational Update and Program News

November 18, 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 has **suspended** awards 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** (Late applications only considered after priority applications are awarded.)
Golden Apple (GA)	**Y**	**12/1/2026 Priority Deadline & 3/1/2027 Final Deadline –**Golden Apple Foundation
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**	Must apply w/ enough time to review application for the term benefits will be used for. Estimated **12-week processing time for applications**.
Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)	**Y**	Same as ING above.
School Social Work Scholarship (Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License Scholarship Program)	**Y***	Was **October 31, 2026.** (Can still apply late but only considered after priority applications are awarded.)
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) -** fill out the required payment information.

2. **Submitting request(s) –** from the Submit Payment Requests tab

    - click the term for payment

    - click submit.

Status Column

On the Student List: Payment screen these statuses appear:

- **P** - Paid
- **S** - Submitted
- **U** - Payment request has been generated but not submitted.

MAP – Payment Requests

MAP Fall (first-term) Payment Request Deadline : **December 4, 2026.**

- Continue to update payment requests as needed.
    - Be careful as the deadline approaches to not cancel an award accidentally.

Late Claims:

- Requests received after the deadline will be held as late claims.
    - Late claims are only paid if sufficient funding is available.

Returning Funds:

- MAP follows the Payment Offset and Reconciliation process.
    - Funds are not returned to ISAC until the end of the academic year. (GAP adjust future claims to accommodate this.)

See August 24 e-message for payment information.

First-Term (Fall) Payment/Benefit Request Deadlines

December 31, 2026

First-term payment/benefit request deadline for the following programs:

- 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**)
- Police/Fire/Correctional Officers (**PFC)**
- School Social Work Scholarship (**SSWS**)
- Teacher of Illinois (**TI**) Scholarship

Payment Offset & Reconciliation

Continue to reconcile payments and correct student records on a timely basis.

Offset Process:

- New payment requests are compared to outstanding amounts owed to ISAC, and payment is adjusted accordingly.

Returning Funds:

- Any funds owed to ISAC as a result are held until the academic year ends.
- Schools with an outstanding amount owed will receive a notice indicating the total amount to be returned.

Reminders:

- Award payments made in the name of one recipient cannot be applied to another recipient at the same school.
- Payment requests are adjusted in GAP to reflect the students' correct awards.
    - After payment is approved, funding can be disbursed to the appropriate student accounts.

GEAR UP – Update

Status:

- Rosters are being processed as they are submitted.
- Payment is issued through the State Comptroller.
- Supplemental rosters will be sent to schools if additional students are identified.

To Do:

- Complete and send rosters to Partner Services Email.
    - Include Special Circumstance Certifications if needed.

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.

2027-28 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

- Helps students who meet the requirements of the RISE Act apply for:
  - Monetary Award Program (MAP)
  - other Illinois financial aid programs.
- **Eligibility criteria to complete the Alternative Application has changed.**

Who Qualifies?

- Students not eligible for federal financial aid should complete the **Prescreening Questionnaire** (first part of the application).
  - Data collected in prescreening questions are retained by ISAC and **will not** be shared with colleges.
- The Financial Aid Planning area has resources to help students complete the financial aid process.

2027-28 MAP Processing

2027-28 ISIR & Alternative Applications are processed daily.

Processing Details:

- The 2027-28 start-up formula:
  - uses **2021-22 reported tuition and fees**;
  - uses the **2021-22 Pell Grant Payment Schedule**;
  - uses a **$5,200 living allowance**; and,
  - has a **maximum annual award amount of $8,400 (with an effective maximum of $8,064 after the 4% reduction)**.

Important Updates



ILASFAA Annual Conference

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

BOARDING PASS



Save the Date

Destination:
ILASFAA Annual Conference

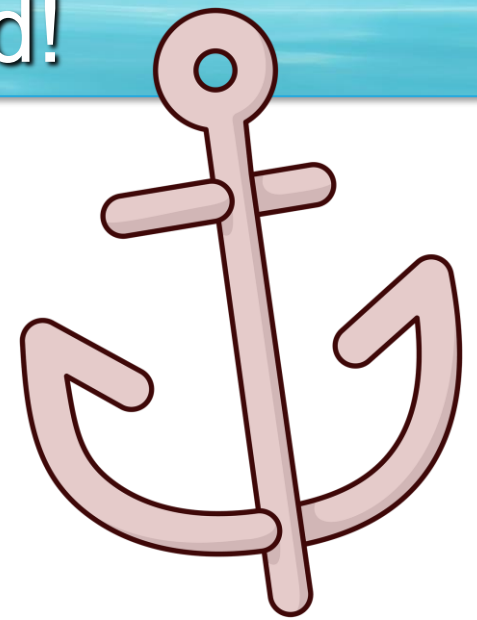
Sail Dates:
March 15-17, 2027

Port:
The Westin Chicago Lombard

ILASFAA – Call For Proposals

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

Join us in shaping the voyage ahead!



Ideas for Presentations/Sessions:

Have an interest session proposal, or an idea for a topic you'd like to request?

- **Google Form** by Friday, November 20th.

Credential Sessions held Monday, March 15th :

Want to participate in a NASFAA Credential Session?

Submit preferences for sessions: **Google Form**.

Questions:

ILASAA Conference Program Committee Co-Chairs:

Bethany Carmien Onwodi (carmien1@illinois.edu)

Haiti Eastin (heastin@parkland.edu).

ILASFAA – Volunteer Form

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

ILASFAA Volunteer Opportunities:

⭐ Membership on a committee benefits your colleagues & students.

⭐ Provides opportunities for personal and professional development.



Complete the Volunteer Form.

Please Note: Volunteers must be current members of ILASFAA.

Next Commission Meeting

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

Tentative agenda items available prior to the meeting

- See: ISAC's Governing Board: The Commission section.

2027 Meetings:

The Commission Meeting Schedule page will be updated with all meetings scheduled in 2027.

NASFAA – Active User Confirmation

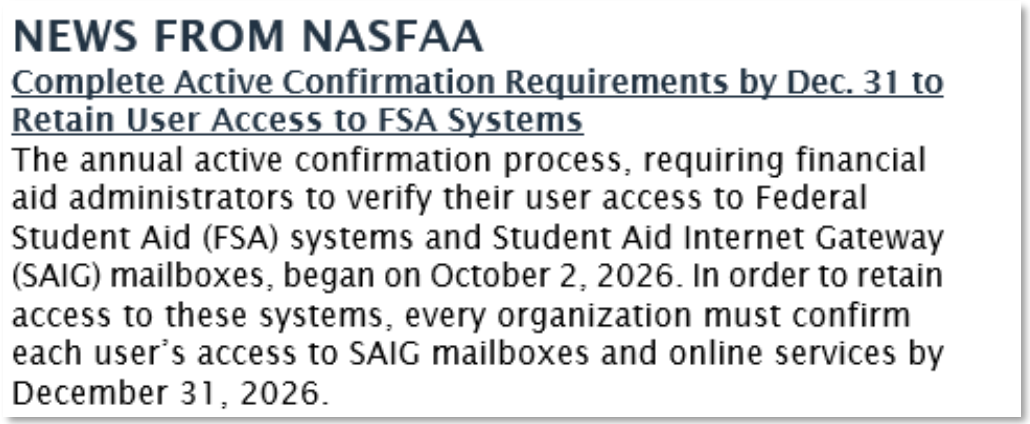
Due: December 31

Need to Do:

Financial Aid Administrators verify user access to:

- Federal Student Aid (FSA) Systems
- Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) mailboxes

Why: Completed to retain access to these systems.



NEWS FROM NASFAA

Complete Active Confirmation Requirements by Dec. 31 to Retain User Access to FSA Systems

The annual active confirmation process, requiring financial aid administrators to verify their user access to Federal Student Aid (FSA) systems and Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) mailboxes, began on October 2, 2026. In order to retain access to these systems, every organization must confirm each user's access to SAIG mailboxes and online services by December 31, 2026.

Holiday Schedule – ISAC Staff Unavailable



Thanksgiving	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day
26th - 27th	Early Dismissal @ 2 PM 24th	25th

Upcoming Monthly Webinars

December	January	February
16th	27th	24th
@ 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.partnerservices@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
Daniela Rios	Daniela.Rios@illinois.gov
Sherry Schonauer	Sherry.Schonauer@illinois.gov

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!**".

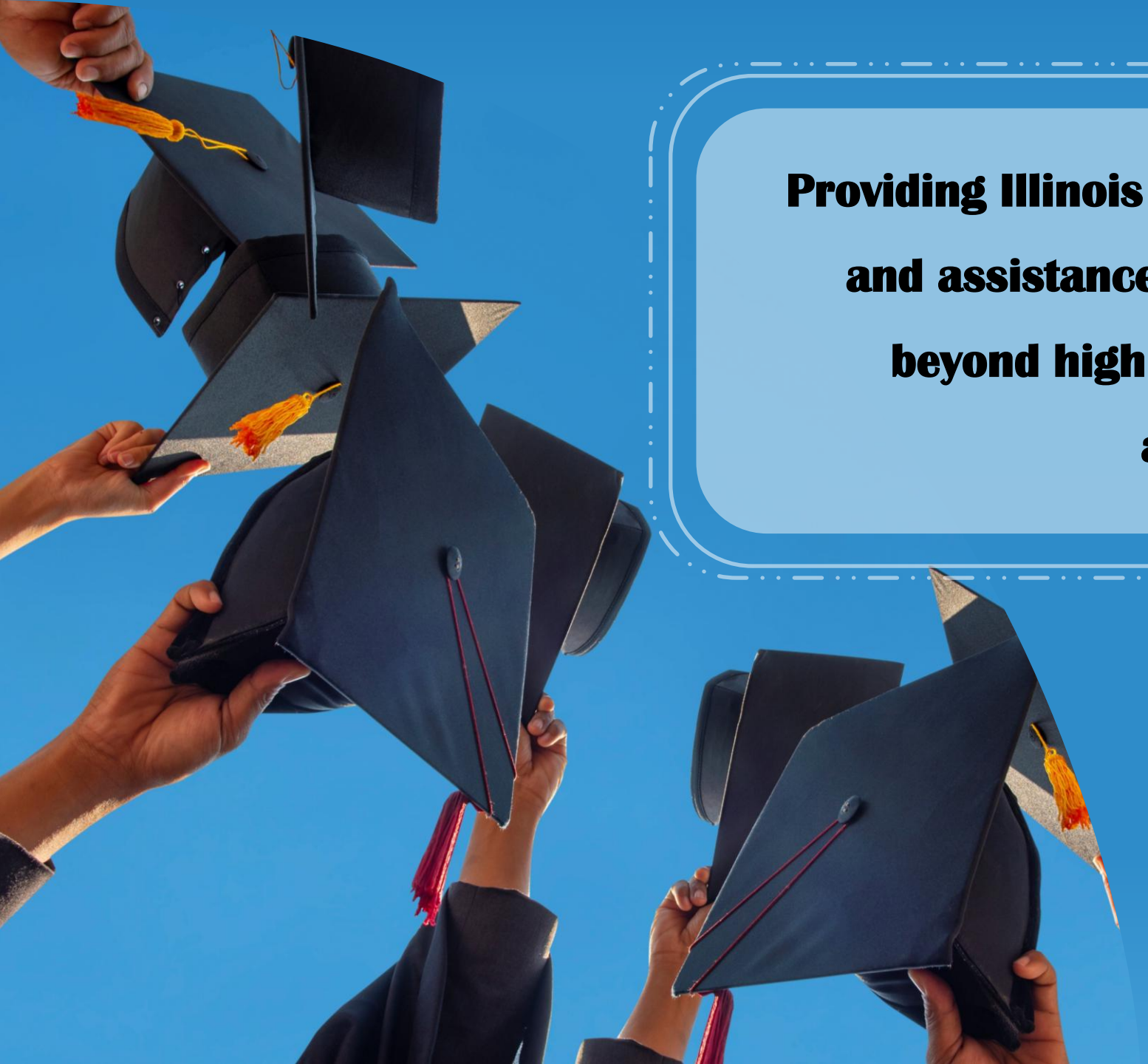
Student/Parents

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
Illinois Student Assistance Commission