

Student and Family FAQs:

The Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid, the RISE Act, and the 2026-27 School Year

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is the state agency that manages the Monetary Award Program (MAP), a need-based grant that helps Illinois students pay for college. ISAC also manages other state scholarships and grants. ISAC works with colleges and universities to award these funds to students.

Q: What is the RISE Act?

The RISE Act is a state law that has allowed ISAC to provide state financial aid to undocumented students who were eligible for in-state tuition. Students eligible for state financial aid under the RISE Act apply using the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative Application).

Q. What happened with the RISE Act?

On July 24, 2026, a federal district [court ruled](#) that the current version of the RISE Act, as applied to undocumented students, is unlawful. The court also prohibited ISAC from providing state financial assistance to undocumented students under the current version of the RISE Act during the 2026-2027 school year.

Q. Does this mean I will lose my MAP grant or other ISAC financial aid for the 2026-27 school year?

Unfortunately, the answer is yes if you are an undocumented student who completed the Alternative Application for the 2026-2027 school year. Because of the judge's ruling, if you were awarded a MAP grant or any other ISAC financial aid under the current version of the RISE Act (by filing the Alternative Application instead of the FAFSA), ISAC is not allowed to pay these grants or scholarships to you or your institution for the 2026-27 school year. We know this court decision brings tremendous uncertainty and financial challenges for Illinois undocumented students. The State of Illinois recognizes the harms to students as a result of this decision, and remains dedicated to college access, affordability, and opportunity for all students.

Q. Do I have to repay the MAP grant or other ISAC financial aid I received in previous academic years?

No, this ruling does not require that you repay the grants or scholarships you received from ISAC in previous academic years.

Q: What should I do now?

Talk with your school's financial aid office and/or your Undocumented Student Resource Liaison. They can help you understand how this change affects you and discuss any options you may have. In June 2026, Governor Pritzker signed into law an amendment to the RISE Act (HB 5093) that goes into effect for the 2027-2028 school year. The court's ruling does not apply to HB 5093. The Alternative Application for the 2027-2028 school year will open on October 1, 2026.