



EAST AURORA
HOME OF THE TOMCATS

Class of 2026:
SENIOR NIGHT



Graduation Requirements

Credits Required	Subjects
4	English
3	Math (Algebra, Geometry, Additional Course)
2	Science
1	American History
½	American Government
1	Social Studies Elective
½	Personal Finance

Credits Required	Subjects
½	Health
½	Driver Education
3	PE / NJROTC / Band
1	World Language, Fine & Performing Arts, or Career & Technical Education
5	Electives

Total Credits Required	Additional Tasks
22	State Testing (ACT) + FAFSA



Available Supports

- Counselors
 - Every student has a counselor assigned to them to support through their senior year, helping them meet graduation requirements, apply to college, seek scholarships, and figure out next steps beyond high school
- Credit Recovery Options and Support
 - Night School, E-Learning during Zero Hour and the rest of the day with dedicated E-Learning Faculty
 - Graduation Coaches
- Testing Support
 - ACT fee waivers available for students interested in retaking the exam
 - SAT fee waivers available
 - Placement testing for Waubensee
 - ASVAB
- Tutoring
 - After school Monday-Thursday, 3:30-4:30 PM, Library
 - Tutorme.com, 24/7 online tutoring support. sign in through Class Link
- SchoolLinks
 - Online platform that allows students to research colleges, careers, and scholarship opportunities. Through SchoolLinks, students will organize their college applications and work collaboratively through the process with the teachers and counselors.



Ongoing Programing and Activities

- College admission representatives routinely visiting during lunch periods throughout the entire school year
- ISAC Financial Aid support every Thursday
- Biweekly support from our Waubensee Community College Admission representative
- Career and industry professional presentations and field trip opportunities
- College and Career Fairs
- College campus visits
 - Waubensee Community College, Aurora University, UIC, Saint Xavier, Northern Illinois, North Central College . . .
- Counselor staffing available for drop-in student support during all lunch periods in the CCC
- Counselor lead workshops
 - Scholarships, Essay Writing, Application Support, etc.
- Early College courses
- Financial Aid Nights and Workshops



EAHS and Aurora University Direct Admission Partnership

- Any member of the Class of 2026 with a 3.0+ GPA at the start of their senior year receives an automatic offer of admission and scholarship award from Aurora University
- No separate application necessary
- Students need to follow up through their My AU account via instructions sent to their d131 email
- AU representatives visit EAHS twice monthly to support interested students through the process and answer any questions



AURORA UNIVERSITY

Class of 2026 Resources

Student D131 Email

- Targeted outreach from counseling
- Check Daily
- Do **not** use D131 email for FAFSA, College Applications, or Scholarships.

Class of 2026 Google Classroom

- Important Information for all Seniors
 - Class code: [gqeinvw](#)



The Tomcat College and Career Center (CCC)

- College Rep Visits
- Scholarship Programming
- Career Exploration
- College and Career Field Trips
- Financial Aid support and Workshops



Scholarship Support

- Routinely promoted in Google Classroom and targeted emails
- Scholarship workshops and evening events
- Compiled and organized in SchoolLinks
- Recognized during Honors Night in the Spring



Common Application

- Used at over 900 colleges and universities
 - 50 colleges in Illinois, including all 12 Illinois public universities
- Once set up Common App automatically syncs with your SchoolLinks account
- Request application fee waiver at every school at once
- Depending on the schools you identify, you may need as many as two teacher letters of recommendation
- Most information you only have to fill out once, but individual schools may require supplemental information to complete their application
- Common App has essay prompts, but will also allow you to submit something you have already written
- Opportunities for Direct Admission, including to Illinois Public Universities



Support for the Financial Aid Process

- Expert support from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) in the CCC every Thursday during lunch periods starting in September
- FAFSA open **October 1**
- Evening workshops for parent and family support with the process, including helping families complete and file the application
 - Information Night on September 30
 - Filing Workshops on 10/23, 11/13, 12/4, 1/22, 2/19, 3/19, 4/16, and 5/7
 - Every workshop will be staffed to support our Spanish speaking families
- Families can file on their own, but support is available for those that would prefer assistance
- Scholarship Night on October 14

Reach out to our ISAC Specialist any time:

Jorge Sanchez
Jorge.Sanchez3@illinois.gov
(630) 423-2065



Daisy Sanchez

Bilingual Admission Advisor

Waubonsee Community College

dsanchez@waubonsee.edu





CAREERS & EDUCATION

Preparing for a brighter future

HI! MY NAME IS Daisy Sanchez

I work for Waubonsee Community College

About me:

- West Aurora Class of 2015
- Associate-Waubonsee Community College -2017
- Bachelor's of Art -Augustana College -2019
- Masters in Higher Education - Northeastern Illinois University-July 2026



#1

What is Career Exploration?

#2

Educational Pathways:

- Community College
- Universities
- Trade School

#3

Things to look out for:

- Scholarships
- Events
- How to support your student

AGENDA



PLANNING YOUR FUTURE, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Remember! Planning your future doesn't mean having everything figured out.



01

You can prepare ahead of time to achieve what you want.

02

You can choose a path that suits your interests and abilities.

03

You save money, effort and time when you have a plan.

04

You avoid feeling lost after high school.



CAREER EXPLORATION

What is Career Exploration?

It's the process of understanding your interests, skills, and values to identify careers that you're passionate about and that align with your strengths.



TOOLS:

Career Coach Waubonsee

A platform that offers career suggestions based on your interests and informs you about academic programs that prepare you for them.





EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

What pathway is right for me?





HOW MANY YEARS DO YOU THINK IT TAKES TO BECOME A NURSE?

The answer is 2 years. You can work as a registered nurse (RN) with just an associate's degree.





COMMUNITY COLLEGE

What they are:

- They offer two-year associate's degrees and technical certificates.
- You can also transfer to a university after two years (or less).

Duration:

2 years (or less for certificates)

- More affordable
- Focus on general education classes

Common majors:

- Criminal Justice
- Business
- HVAC
- EMT
- Nursing (RN)
- Mechanics
- Psychology

Examples

- Waubonsee Community College
- College of DuPage
- Junior Joliet College
- Harper College



UNIVERSITY

What they are:

Institutions that offer bachelor's degrees.

Some also offer graduate programs.

- Public and private universities
- More expensive (compared to community colleges)
- Many more opportunities for programs.



DURATION:

4 years (full-time)



Majors:

- Business
- Medicine
- Education
- Social Sciences
- Criminal Justice
- Psychology
- Lawyer
- etc.



EXAMPLES:

- Aurora University
- DePaul University
- University of Chicago
- Northern Illinois University

TRADE/VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

What they are:

Specialized schools that prepare you for specific jobs through practical training.

Duration:

8 months to 2 years, depending on the school.

They only require students to take courses directly related to their major.

Careers:

- Carpentry
- Automotive Maintenance
- HVAC
- Computer Technology
- Cosmetology

Examples

- Universal Technical Institute (UTI)
- Skin & Beauty Institute (Cosmetology)

Note that technical programs can be found at community colleges.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES and upcoming Events



**YOUR SCHOLARSHIP.
YOUR FUTURE.**

Apply for a Waubonsee Foundation Scholarship!
Two application deadlines:
Feb. 9 and May 4, 2026
APPLY EARLY FOR MAXIMUM CONSIDERATION.

300+ AWARDS **\$300,000+** TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE

Apply online at:
waubonsee.edu/foundationsscholarships

QUESTIONS?
Contact the Development Office
at (630) 466-2316
or email foundation@waubonsee.edu

 **WAUBONSEE**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Foundation

Waubonsee does not discriminate on the basis of any individual's actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, veteran's status, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, marital status, order of protection status, pregnancy, disability, citizenship status or any other characteristic protected by law in its programs or services. Inquiries regarding this policy may be directed to: Katie Arp, ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, or Jane Hershman, Title IX Coordinator, Suite 41 at Waubonsee Drive, Sugar Grove, IL 60054, compliance@waubonsee.edu. RS 229

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE NEXT YEAR?



**SCHOLARSHIPS
ARE AVAILABLE!**

One application, many opportunities!
Apply Online
November 1, 2024 - January 24, 2025
Visit **cffrv.org**
to start your application

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF THE FOX RIVER VALLEY**

Contact Community Foundation of Fox River Valley
for more information at: 630-896-7800 or scholarships@cffrv.org.

NOVEMBER 1

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES and Upcoming Events



Monday, Oct. 6,
2025

6 to 8 p.m.



WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS VISIT

NOVEMBER 12 & 13
9AM-1PM

ATTENTION EAST
AURORA SENIORS

TAKE THE NEXT STEP!

ENJOY A TRIP TO WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE! DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE OUR SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS, ENJOY A PRESENTATION FROM OUR ADMISSIONS TEAM, AND GET A REAL FEEL FOR COLLEGE LIFE!

REGISTER NOW



INCLUDES

- ✓ Admissions Presentation
- ✓ Campus Tour
- ✓ Free Lunch
- ✓ Q&A

ASK US ABOUT OUR:

- ✓ Career programs
- ✓ Transfer pathways to 4-years universities
- ✓ Extracurricular Opportunities
- ✓ Inclusive Community

FOR MORE INFORMATION

630-906-4330
dsanchez@waubonsee.edu



Things you can do as parents:

01

Make time to visit universities

02

Encourage him/her to ask questions

03

Support your student





QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS?



dsanchez@waubonsee.edu



630-906-4330



Christian Montes

ISAC Corps Member

Illinois Student Assistance Commission

christian.montes@illinois.gov



The Financial Aid Process

Christian Montes

Elgin Community College District



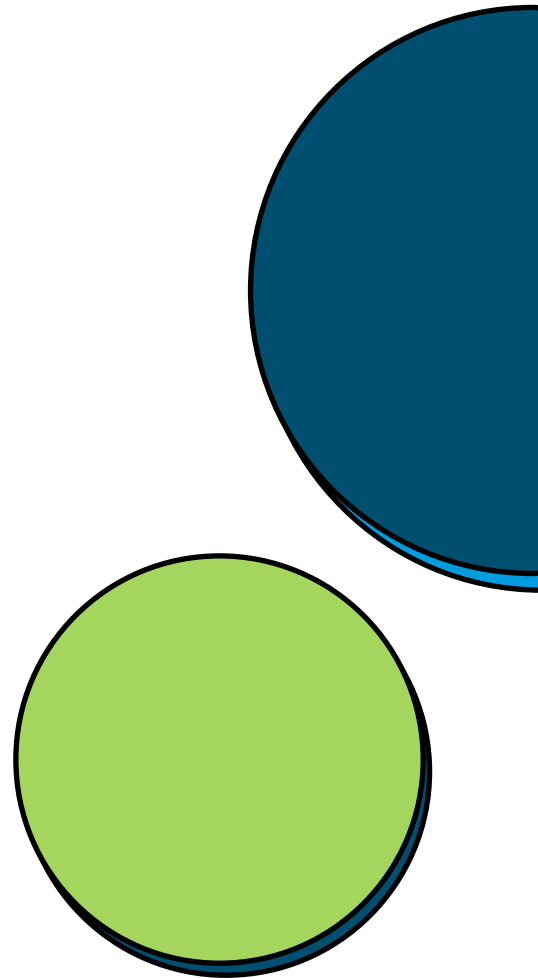


The ISACorps

The **ISACorps** is a group of recent college graduates who work for the **Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)** to help high school students navigate the college and financial aid process. We serve as near-peer mentors, providing free resources on college applications, financial aid, scholarships, and career planning.

Ask Questions!

- There are many things to consider
- Some common questions include:
 - How much does college cost?
 - What is financial aid?
 - When and how do I apply?
- What other things come to mind?
- Ask me, I'm here to help!



Postsecondary Education

- An institution of higher education that awards a degree or credential post-high school graduation
- Includes, but is not limited to, universities, colleges, and trade schools

Vocational/Trade

- Up to 2 years

Associate's Degree

- 2 years

Bachelor's Degree

- 4 years

Master's Degree

- Bachelor's plus 1-3 years

Cost of Attendance

- Colleges create a budget to show the total cost for the school year, known as the cost of attendance (COA)
- **Direct expenses** are those paid directly to the institution
- **Indirect expenses** are not always paid directly to the institution

Tuition & Fees	Direct
Living Expenses (Food & Housing)	Direct or indirect
Books, Course Materials, Supplies & Equipment	Indirect
Transportation	
Miscellaneous Expenses	
= Cost of Attendance	

Types of Financial Aid



Gift Aid

*Free Money

- Grants- Usually need-based
- Scholarships- Awarded for many reasons



Self-Help Aid

Borrowed or earned

- Loans- Must be paid back
- Federal Work-Study- Earned by working

Sources of Financial Aid

US DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



ISAC



COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES



PRIVATE SOURCES



- **Tip #1:** to look for scholarships, think about what you buy, eat, wear
- **Tip #2:** local scholarships = less competition (smaller applicant pool)
- **Tip #3:** be careful with **scholarship scams** (don't pay for free money!)

Should I Consider Student Loans?

Source of the Loan

Know where the money comes from

Federal vs. private loans

Interest Rate

Know your rate

Is it variable?
Fixed?

Repayment & Grace Period

When are you required to start paying?

What repayment options do you have?

Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized

Subsidized loans are generally more desirable

When does the interest begin to accrue?

Other Loan Considerations

- Borrowers are not required to accept all loans offered
 - Borrowers can reduce amounts or decline loans
- Loans from the Department of Education have additional benefits
 - Fixed interest rate
 - Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized
 - Grace period
 - Deferment/ Forbearance options
 - Repayment plan options

The Big Grants for 2025-26





Step 1 (Oct-Nov): Complete an Application

- **FAFSA** – the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*
 - The first step for most students – usually available October 1st
 - Used to apply for federal and Illinois financial aid
 - Free to file at www.fafsa.gov
- **Alternative App** – the *Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid*
 - For qualifying undocumented students – available same day as the FAFSA
 - Used to apply for Illinois financial aid only
 - Free to file at www.isac.org/alternativeapp
- **Other forms** - vary by college
 - Institutional forms
 - Other applications like the CSS Profile
 - Used to apply for institutional aid

*In Illinois, it is a graduation requirement to complete a financial aid application or an opt-out form

Gather the Info You Need

- **FAFSA & Alternative Application**

- Federal tax returns, W-2s, and other records of income
- Banking statements and records of investments
- Records of untaxed income
- List of colleges student would like to attend

- **FAFSA Only**

- Student's Social Security Number (SSN), if parent doesn't have one, they can still apply
- Alien Registration Number, if students is not a U.S. Citizen
- StudentAid.gov account – students and parents must have their own

Note: neither application will ask about the parents' immigration status

StudentAid.gov Account

- To submit a FAFSA, you will need to create a studentaid.gov account
- Students and parents need their own account
- It's best to create a studentaid.gov account a few days before starting your FAFSA
- Parents without a Social Security Number can also create one
- Go to www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id to get started

Parent Information

- Most students must report parent information until the age of 24, even if the student doesn't live with them
- For financial aid purposes, only parents listed below should provide info on the application

Parents

- Biological
- Adoptive
- Stepparent, if married to a biological or adoptive parent

Not Parents

- Legal guardians
- Foster parents
- Grandparents, siblings, aunts/uncles
- Friends or other relatives
- Other people, even if they claim student on their taxes

Which Parent Should Report Their Information?

- Are the student's biological/adoptive parents married to each other?
 - Yes ☐ Both parents' information
 - No ☐ Go to next question
- If unmarried, do the biological/adoptive parents live together?
 - Yes ☐ Both parents' information
 - No ☐ Go to the next question
- Did one parent provide most of the financial support for the student in the last 12 months?
 - Yes ☐ That parent's information (and their spouse's, if remarried)
 - No ☐ The parent with greater income & assets (and their spouse's, if remarried)

Signing Your Application

The FAFSA

- Check box at the end after reviewing terms & conditions
- Click on Sign button
- Student and parent(s) sign their respective part of the FAFSA

The Alternative App

- A personal identification number (PIN) will be used to sign electronically
- Students and parents need their own
- The PIN will be generated and sent via email by ISAC

Student Aid Index

- The application will calculate your Student Aid Index (SAI)
 - If you file a FAFSA, you will see it on your confirmation page
 - If you file an Alternative App, you will not see it; you can ask your college's financial aid office
- The SAI reflects what you can contribute towards your education in one academic year
- It can be a negative number
- The SAI is used to determine eligibility for federal and state financial aid
- Many colleges use it for institutional aid eligibility

Step 2 (Dec- Feb): Complete Verification (if selected)

A process used by schools to confirm your application data is accurate

Do not be alarmed! It's a common process.

You may be asked to submit additional documentation

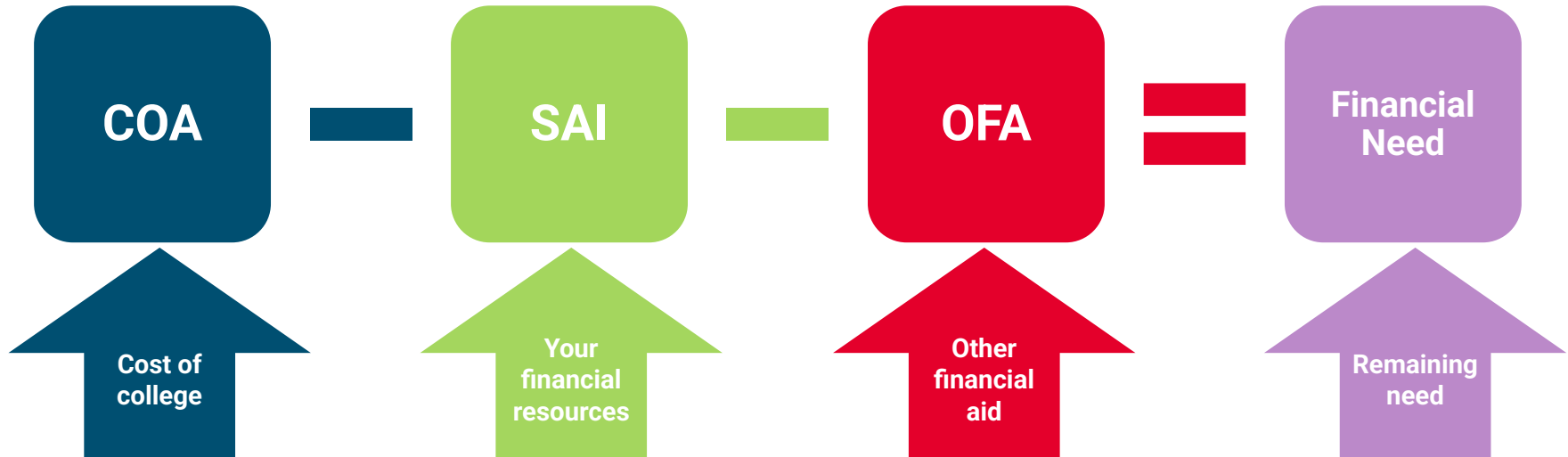
Provide only the information requested

Submit all documents on time

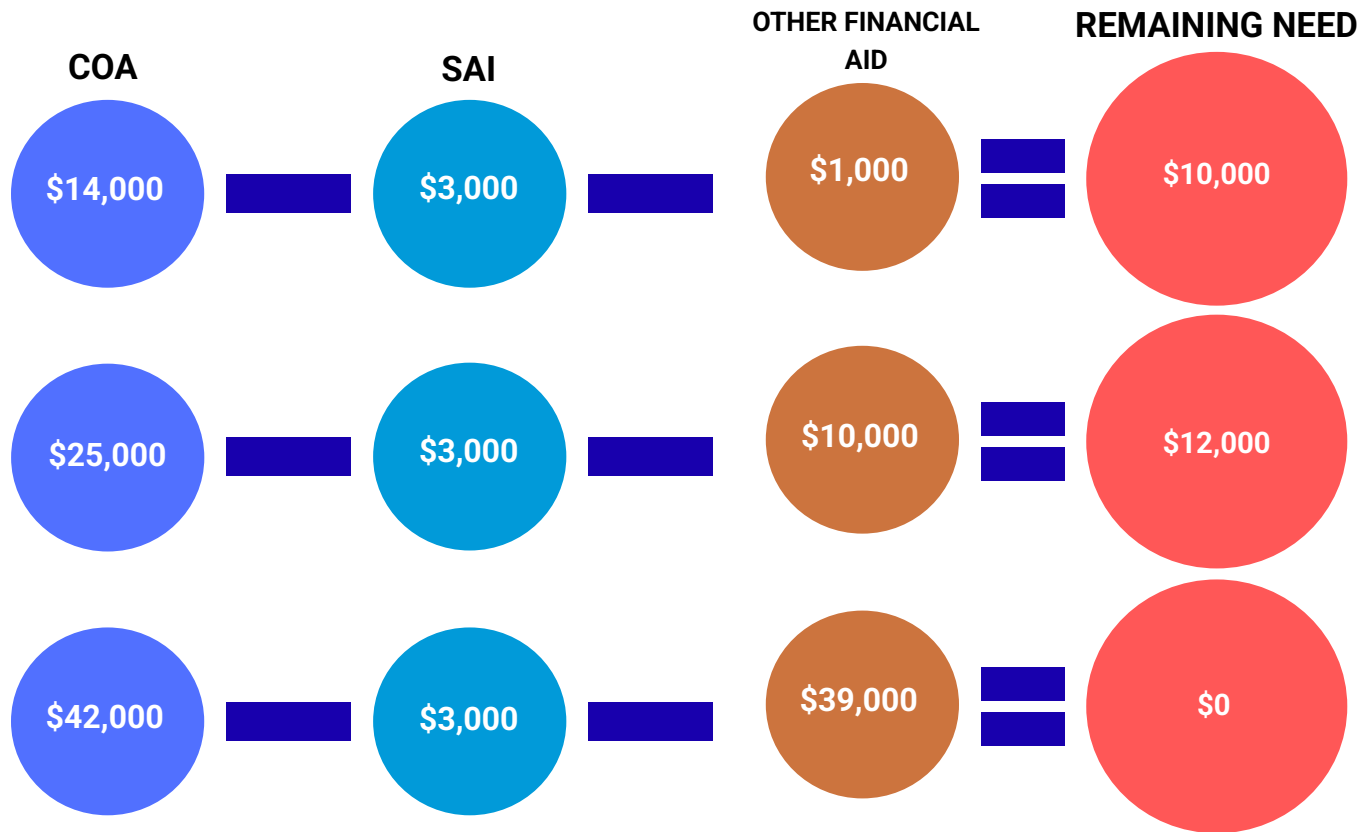
And keep copies of everything!

Step 3 (Jan- Apr): Receive and Review Offers

- The amount of aid depends on your financial need and Student Aid Index (SAI)
- Colleges will consider all available aid to try to meet your financial need, but this is not always guaranteed
- All available aid will be packaged into a financial aid offer



Comparing Your Options



Financial Aid Offers

A list of the types and amounts of financial aid a college is offering a student, including:

- Tuition and fees
- Grants, scholarships, and loans offered
- Out-of-pocket cost
- Other aid options available such as a Parent Plus Loan

When should students expect their financial aid offer?

- February-May (4-year colleges)
- Late spring-summer (2-year colleges)

Where can students find their financial aid offers?

- Mail, Email, Student Portal of the institution

Analyze Your Offers

Things to consider in your financial aid offers

- Deadlines for accepting/declining offers
- Types of aid included (grants, scholarships, loans, etc.)
- Offers with grants & scholarships (versus loans) tend to be more desirable
- Pay attention to student loan types and interest rates

Questions to Ask

- Do you have to meet any conditions? (e.g., maintain a certain GPA)
- Which ones are renewable? (i.e., can I get it more than one year?)
- What will your out-of-pocket cost be? (remaining cost after all aid)

Step 4 (Apr- May 1): Decide & Respond

- Once you decide, respond to all colleges
- Accept the offer from the college you will attend
 - This lets them know you plan to attend
 - Serves as confirmation you will receive the aid they offered
- Decline offers from the colleges you will not attend
 - Let them know you will not attend
 - Frees up the financial aid to give to another student

Step 5: Complete Pending Processes

- Check your college email/student account to see pending tasks
- Submit all required forms
- Confirm you will attend (intent to enroll)
- Accept your financial aid offer
- Pay enrollment & housing deposits if applicable, or ask for waivers if needed

Repeat the Process Every Year

- Applying for financial aid is not a one-time process
- You must file a FAFSA or Alternative App every year you attend college
- Circumstances can change from year to year, it is important to reapply
 - E.g., loss of income, new family member, marriage, divorce, etc.
 - These things can affect your eligibility

Tips & Reminders

Apply as soon as applications become available
(usually October 1st)

The FAFSA & Alternative App are free to complete
do not pay anyone!

Keep track of deadlines! Missing one can delay your financial aid

It's never too early to apply for scholarships!

Reapply every year you will be in college!

Trusted Websites

- Stay up-to-date and learn more using these free, trusted sources of information

COLLEGE PLANNING MADE EASY.

Planning for college can seem pretty overwhelming, but it's a lot easier with the right tools just a click away. And it's even better when those tools are free! Use the ISAC Student Portal to help you choose a college, learn about careers, find scholarships, simplify the financial aid process. So it's time to buckle your seatbelt and reach more. You can even connect with one of our ISACorps members for one-on-one help or to find a workshop in your area!

Check out the First Generation Scholar Network!
If you're the first in your family to go to college, there are many resources to help support you. From financial aid, and more of your college and college costs to study about you are looking for a career that will allow you to use your skills and experience to help others. You can even connect with one of our ISACorps members for one-on-one help or to find a workshop in your area!

studentportal.isac.org

Apply for Aid Using the FAFSA Form

Apply Now

Learn More About Applying for Aid

Learn About Public Service Loan Forgiveness >

Learn About Student Loan Debt Relief >

Prepare for Loan Payments to Restart >

Request a School Aid Offer >

Request a Master Promissory Note (MPN) >

Considering School

In School

Parent

In Repayment

studentaid.gov

Complete the FAFSA® Form

New to the FAFSA® Process?

Completing the FAFSA form is now 100% online

Start Here

Returning User?

Current Info | Add a school

View your Student Aid Report (SAR)

Log In

fafsa.gov

ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION FOR ILLINOIS FINANCIAL AID

Intended for qualifying
undocumented students

Alternative Application to apply for Illinois MAP Grants

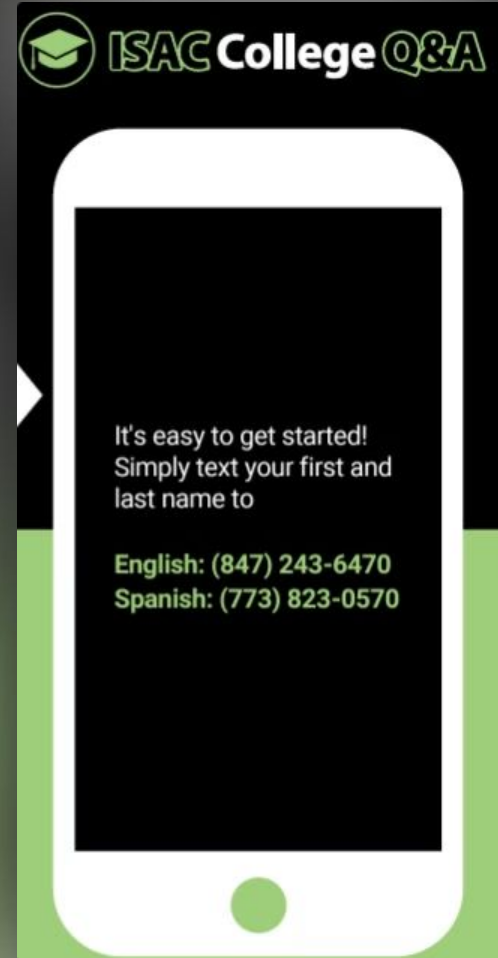
The Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid allows qualifying undocumented students who are not otherwise eligible for federal financial aid to apply for Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants to attend eligible Illinois colleges, universities, and career education programs.

The pre-screening questions in this application will help you determine if you are a qualifying undocumented student who is not eligible for federal financial aid.

isac.org/alternativeapp

ISAC College Q&A

- Check out the free ISAC College Q&A text messaging service:
 - Get your questions about college planning and financial aid answered
 - Receive important information about college planning events and deadlines
- You will be prompted for the name of your school and graduation year to verify that you are a student



Contact Your School Representative!

Jorge Sanchez

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**Presenters will be available in the lobby to
answer any questions.
Thank you and good night.**

