

2024



COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING<sup>®</sup>  
CONFERENCE

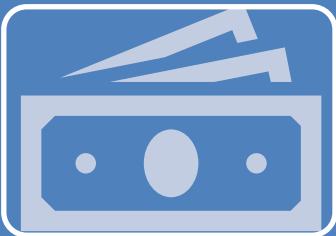
# Trends on Financial Aid Application Completion and What It Tells Us

Beth Groves & Tommy Semanic  
*Professional Development Specialists*  
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

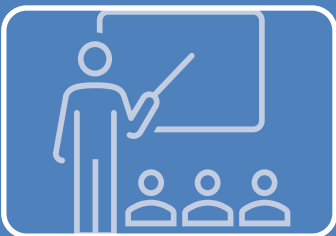
# About ISAC



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



**We administer scholarships and grants to students across the State of Illinois**

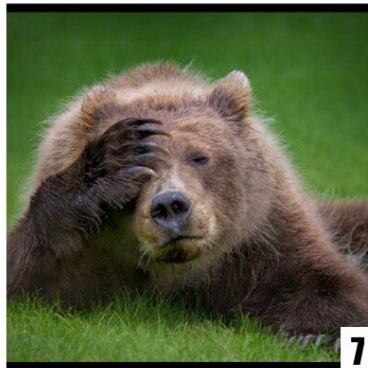


**We provide professional development offerings on navigating the financial aid process, resources and support for underrepresented students, and understanding student loan repayment/forgiveness programs**

# Agenda

1. National and State Level Data
2. Class of 2024 Completion Data
3. Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative

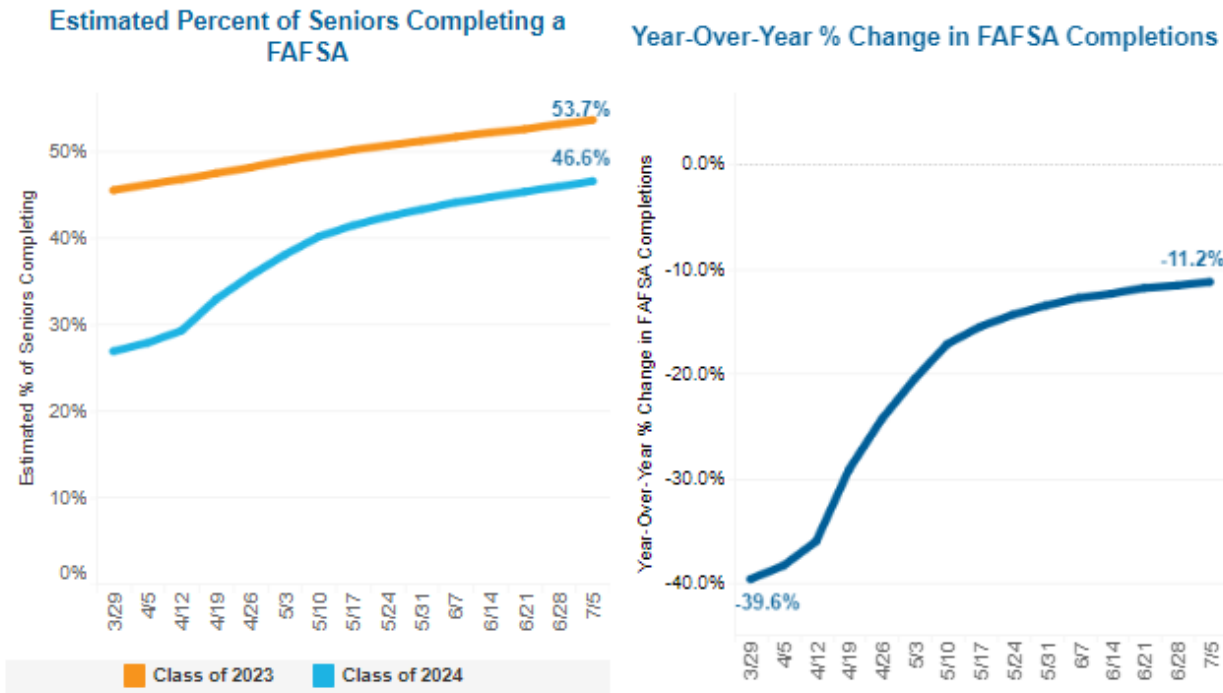
# FAFSA Wellness Check



# NATIONAL AND STATE LEVEL DATA

# National College Attainment Network (NCAN) FAFSA Tracker-Illinois

Through July 5, 2024, 46.6% of the high school class of 2024 has completed a FAFSA. There have been 1,940,452 completions nationally, a -11.2% change compared to last academic year.



# National FAFSA Tracker - Illinois

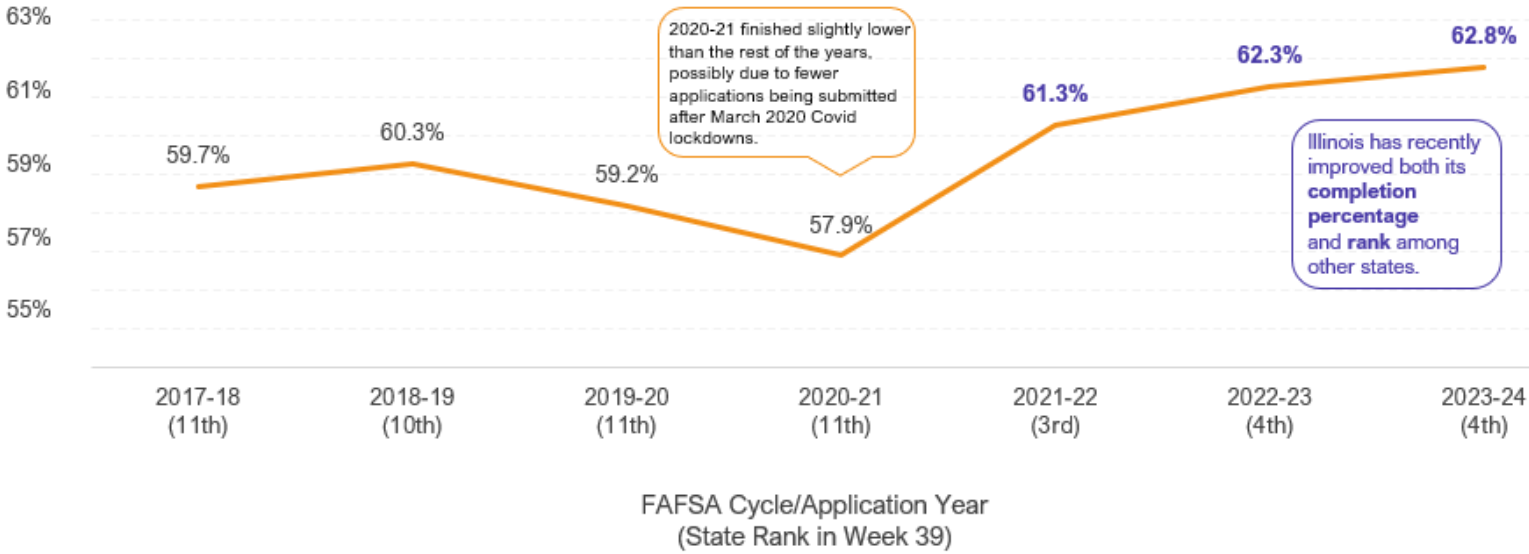
- We rank in 5<sup>th</sup> place nationally as of July 5, 2024
- The National College Attainment Network (NCAN) reports on FAFSAs completed, not FAFSAs submitted
- We are above the national average by 9.3%

1	2	3	4	5
TN	LA	PR	DC	IL
58.7%	57.1%	56.0%	55.9%	55.9%

	Rank	% of Seniors Completing	
Tennessee	1	58.7%	▲
Louisiana	2	57.1%	
Puerto Rico	3	56.0%	
Washington, D.C.	4	55.9%	
Illinois	5	55.9%	
Texas	6	54.5%	
Delaware	7	54.0%	
Connecticut	8	53.2%	
New Jersey	9	52.2%	
New York	10	51.4%	

# Illinois FAFSA Completion Rates Over Time

Illinois FAFSA Completion Percentage Among Illinois Public High School Seniors, AY18-24 (NCAN)



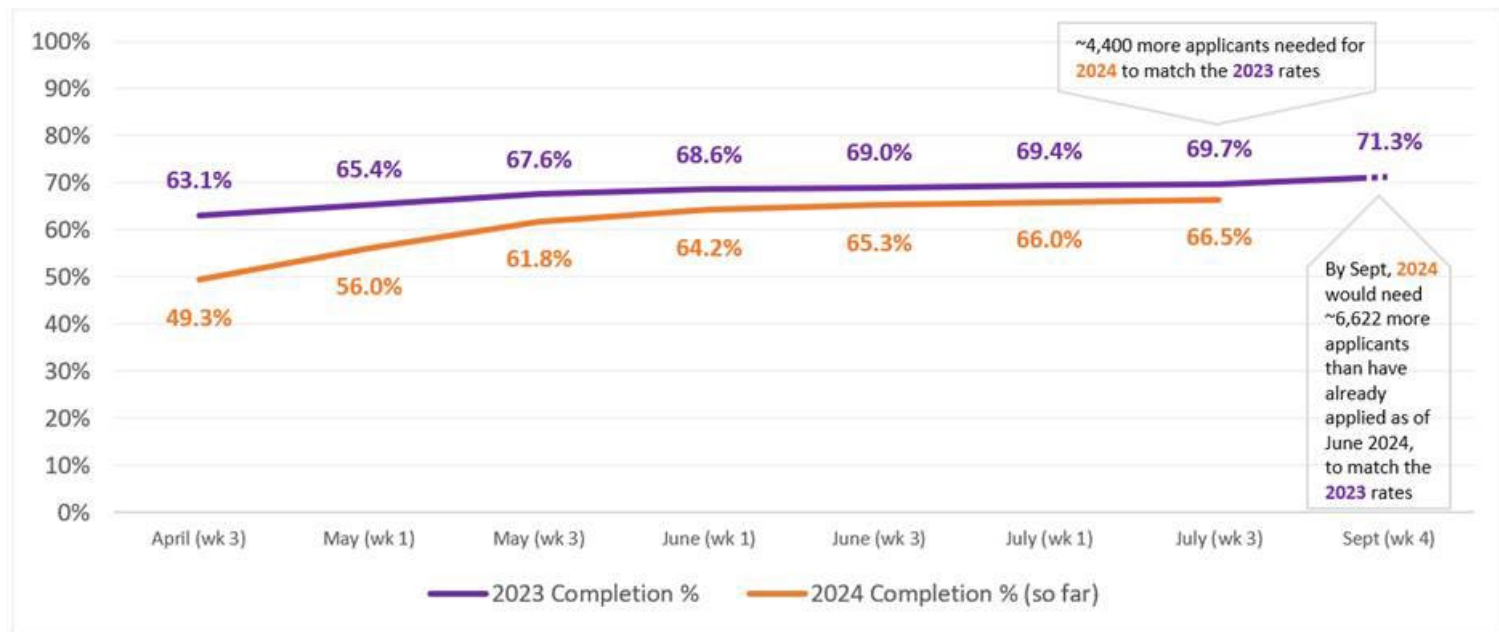
Note: NCAN uses projected senior class sizes, based on previous-year school surveys. Application counts do not include Illinois' Alternative Application.



# Illinois Financial Aid Application Rates Over Time

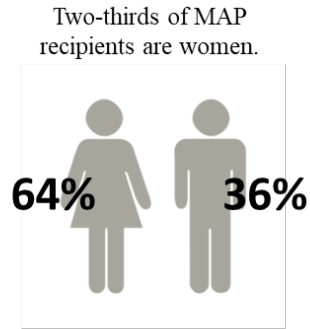
- ISAC completion data includes all Illinois Public High School senior students who have filed a FAFSA or Alternative Application

Financial Aid Application Completion Rates for 2023 and 2024

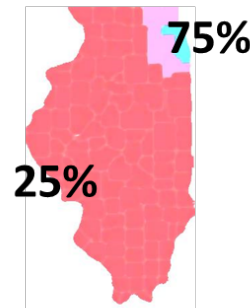


# Monetary Award Program (MAP) Recipients

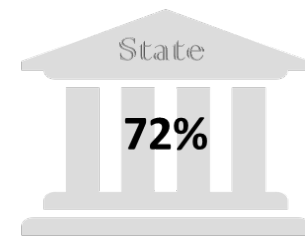
Figure 6.0 of the 2023 ISAC Data Book



Three quarters of MAP recipients are from Chicago or the collar counties



A majority of MAP recipients attend a public university or a public community college



Characteristics of Paid Dependent/Independent Combined MAP Recipients FY2023

More than half of MAP recipients have no resources for college.



54 percent have a federal Expected Family Contribution (the amount they can be expected to pay toward college) of zero.

MAP recipients are from low-income households.

MAP recipient mean income

\$30,708

2020 HHS poverty guideline for a family of four

\$26,200

AY2022-23 MAP eligibility is determined on CY2020 income

MAP recipients come from larger sized households on average.

MAP recipient average household size



Illinois average household size



# MAP Claims

100,023 high school seniors from the 2022-2023 class, who filled out a FAFSA or Alternative Application for the first time

46,791 MAP eligible students*		53,232 not MAP eligible	
28,452 students that claimed MAP		18,339 students did not claim MAP	
10,709 students from public 2-yr schools	9,874 students from public 4-yr schools	7,869 students from other** schools	

\* To see a list of criteria that makes a student eligible for a MAP grant, please refer to ISAC's website: <https://www.isac.org/isac-gift-assistance-programs/map/map-eligibility-requirements/>

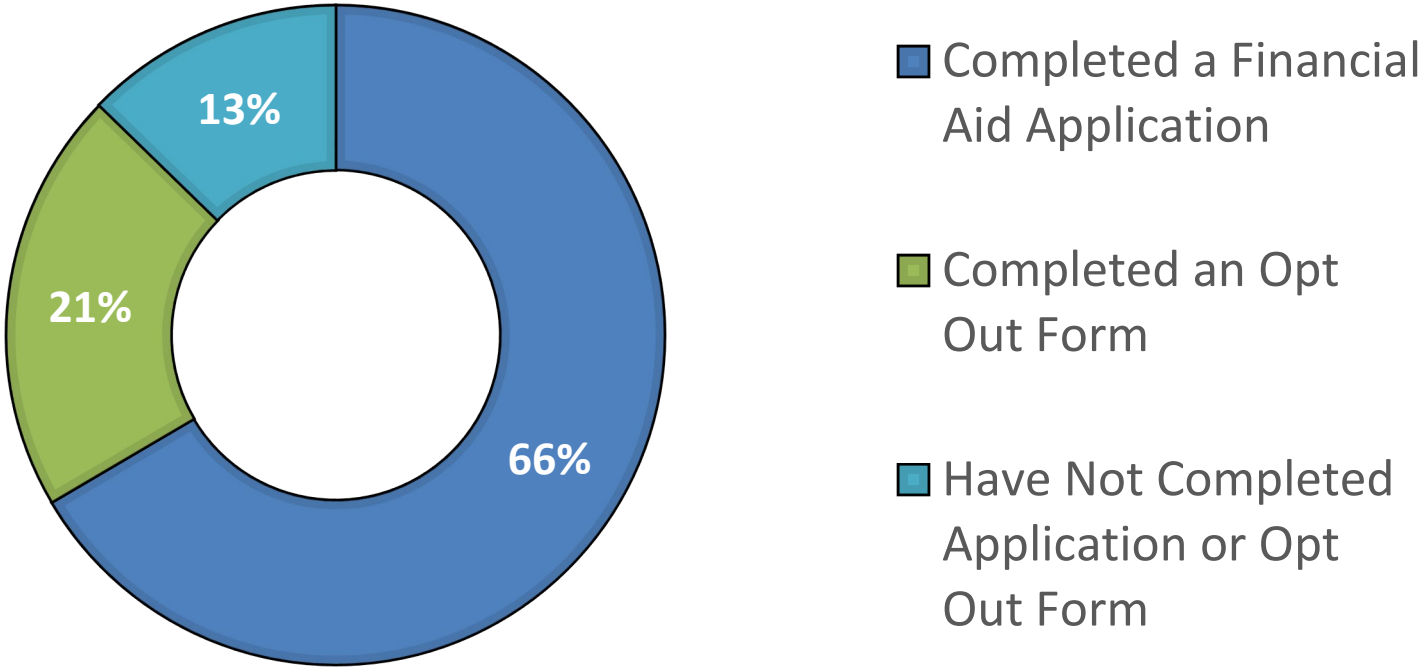
\*\*other includes non-profit 4-yr, nursing and professional, and proprietary schools

# CLASS OF 2024 COMPLETION DATA



# Financial Aid Application & Waiver Completion Data

CLASS OF 2024 AS OF 7/13/24



# What data are we looking at? (continued)


- Schools in the same district but have different rates of completion
- What supports do each of these schools have? What supports don't they have?
- ISACorps Coordinators have access to GAP to provide information to the ISACorps in the area to support schools with lower rates of completion

#STUDENTS	%OPTOUT	%FAFSAS	%TOTAL
197	0%	82%	82%
680	3%	57%	60%
666	4%	57%	61%
866	3%	36%	39%
1005	5%	22%	27%

# Financial Aid Application Completion Performance Metrics

 **Financial Aid Applications Completed by School: Class of 2024**

As of July 01, 2024, 66% of high school seniors have completed a FAFSA or Alternative Application Search

REGION	COUNTY	CITY	DISTRICT	HIGH SCHOOL	CT	YEAR	#STUDENTS	%FAFSA
19	DuPage	WESTMONT	201	 WESTMONT HIGH SCHOOL		2024	98	<div style="width: 85%;"><span>85%</span></div>
12	Clay	CLAY CITY	10	 CLAY CITY HIGH SCHOOL		2024	20	<div style="width: 85%;"><span>85%</span></div>
30	Union	ANNA	81	 ANNA JONESBORO COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL		2024	104	<div style="width: 85%;"><span>85%</span></div>
15	Cook	CHICAGO	299	 UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO WOODLAWN CHARTER SCHOOL		2024	66	<div style="width: 84%;"><span>84%</span></div>

# FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION COMPLETION INITIATIVE





# The Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative

- Identify students who have completed a financial aid application or non-participation form
- Identify students who have not completed a financial aid application or non-participation form
- Identify if a student needs assistance with their financial aid application – e.g., if they filed a FAFSA but no SAI was generated



# Financial Aid Application Data Matching

ISBE provides ISAC with public school's class rosters;  
Private schools must upload their own roster



Your student roster is then matched with FAFSAs and Alternative Applications that are filed each day



ISAC updates a school's completion data every day



ISAC updates the Performance Metrics page every Monday



# High School Data Available

List of students

Aggregate data for the entire student body

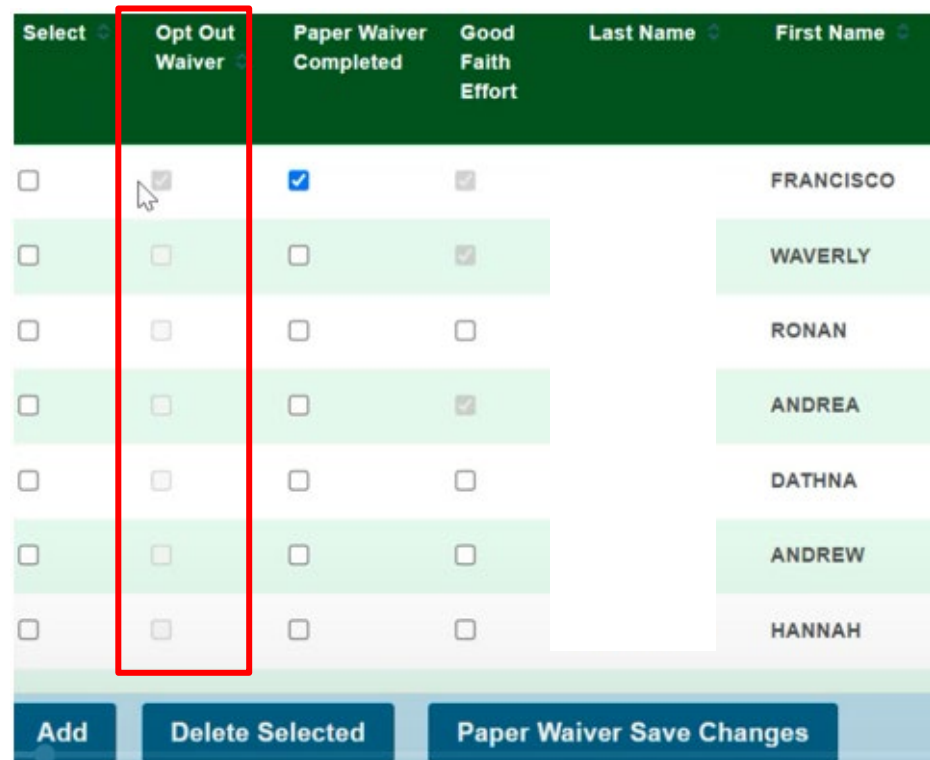
Number of MAP eligible students

Number of Pell eligible students

Student Aid Index (SAI) ranges

# New Functions in GAP Access

- The non-participation form is now completed via ISAC's student portal
- Once a student completes the form, it will automatically populate in GAP Access
- Paper Waiver Tracking



Select	Opt Out Waiver	Paper Waiver Completed	Good Faith Effort	Last Name	First Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FRANCISCO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WAVERLY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RONAN	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ANDREA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DATHNA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANDREW	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HANNAH	

Buttons: Add, Delete Selected, Paper Waiver Save Changes

# New Functions in GAP Access (continued)

- You can now complete the Good Faith Effort Form via GAP Access
- This can be used for students who do not want to file a financial aid application or waiver and for students who have extenuating circumstances

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Good Faith Effort Details". At the top left, there is a light blue header bar with the title. Below the header, there is a light blue background for the form content. The form contains several fields and a checkbox:

- A text input field at the top left, currently empty.
- A label "Description of Extenuating Circumstance(s):" followed by a large text area containing the letter "I".
- A label "Description of Good Faith Effort(s) to Assist Student:" followed by a large text area.
- A checkbox that is currently unchecked, followed by the text "Principal Attestation of Good Faith Effort to Assist Student: I hereby attest that we, the school, have exhausted all reasonable means to support the student in completing a financial aid application."
- A label "Name of person completing this Good Faith Effort:" followed by a large text area.
- At the bottom left, there are two buttons: "Save" and "Cancel".

# New Functions in GAP Access (continued)

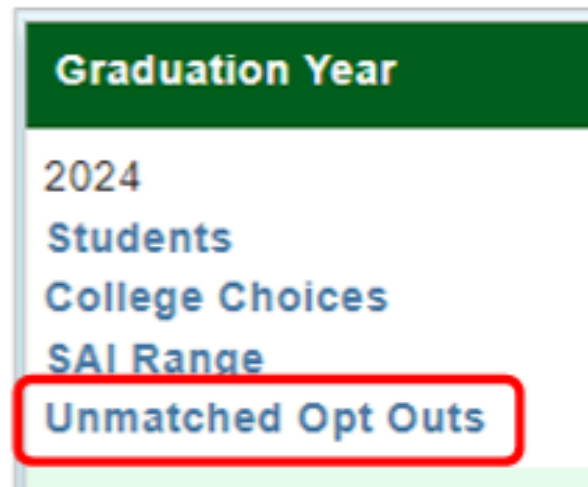
- Anyone with an admin account can now grant an admin waiver with FAFSA Simplification as the rationale

Select	Opt Out Waiver	Paper Waiver Completed	Admin Waiver - FAFSA Simplification
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Buttons: Add, Delete Selected, Paper Waiver Save Ch

# New Functions in GAP Access (continued)

- You can now see Unmatched Opt-Out Forms
- Students who complete the waiver online and enter your high school, but the information they reported does not match on GAP Access



Entries displayed 10 Filter

Student First Name	Student Last Name	Student Date of Birth	Student/Parent Email	Date of the submission	Submitted by
AC	TEST	06/21/2005	testone@test.org	2024-01-24 07:39:06.027	Student

# Downloading a Report from GAP Access

Select	Opt Out Waiver	Paper Waiver Completed	Good Faith Effort	Last Name	First Name	MI	DOB	FAFSA Status	Initial FAFSA Received Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		FRANCISCO	R	10/19/2005	No FAFSA Filed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		WAVERLY	D	10/09/2005	No FAFSA Filed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		RONAN	G	09/23/2005	No FAFSA Filed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		ANDREA		10/17/2005	No FAFSA Filed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		DATHNA	P	03/16/2006	No FAFSA Filed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		ANDREW		10/25/2005	No FAFSA Filed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		HANNAH		10/25/2005	No FAFSA Filed	
								No FAFSA Filed	

Add
Delete Selected
Paper Waiver Save Changes
Excel Report
Back



# What can you do with the information from the report?

- For students who have a FAFSA Filed, but have no SAI:
  - This indicates a correction needs to be made; therefore, reach out to these students to help them during the school day
- For students who have not filed an application or waiver:
  - Having a conversation about their postsecondary options
    - Do students know what a FAFSA is?
  - Are they interested in pursuing a postsecondary credential but are unsure of how to get started?
  - Send a reminder message about completing an application or waiver and where to find support

# What can you do with the information from the report? (continued)

- For a student who has a confirmation email, but they show as no FAFSA filed in GAP Access:
  - Data match issue – check spelling of name, check the student completed the correct application year
- Share the information with additional counselors and staff
- How often are you checking GAP Access?
  - Are you checking once a day, once a week?



# Recognition of Excellence Awards

- Recognition of efforts from high schools that focus on supporting their students and families through the financial aid process
- Recognition is awarded based on the school's financial aid application completion rates
- Completion rates are calculated based on the high school's class roster that were provided in one of two ways:
  - ISBE-provided data (public high schools)
  - Class roster upload (Private schools)

# Recognition of Excellence: Performance Metrics

- Schools are designated one of the following recognitions:
  - Platinum  $\geq 95\%$
  - Gold  $\geq 85\%$
  - Silver  $\geq 75\%$
  - Bronze  $\geq 65\%$

**FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION COMPLETION PERFORMANCE METRICS**

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTED FINANCIAL AID COMPLETION MEDALISTS:

PLATINUM	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
URBAN PREP ACADEMY FOR YOUNG MEN BRONZEVILLE	COLLINS ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL	RICHARD T CRANE MEDICAL PREP	CARRIER MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

HOW DOES YOUR HIGH SCHOOL RANK ON CLASS OF 2024 COMPLETIONS?

Financial Aid Applications Completed by School: Class of 2024

As of April 22, 2024, 49% of high school seniors have completed a FAFSA or Alternative Application

REGION	COUNTY	DISTRICT	HIGH SCHOOL	CT	CITY	#STUDENTS	%OPTOUT	%FAFSAS	%TOTAL
15	Cook	299	URBAN PREP ACADEMY FOR YOUNG MEN BRONZEVILLE	PLATINUM	CHICAGO	52	0%	100%	100%
15	Cook	299	COLLINS ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL	GOLD		51	0%	96%	96%
15	Cook	299	RICHARD T CRANE MEDICAL PREP	SILVER		40	0%	92%	92%

This is awesome! Congratulations on your leadership in earning a Platinum Medal for having a financial aid application completion rate above 95%.

# Discussion & Action Items

- What data do you have access to?
- What trends can you identify?
- Where do you see gaps in your school's data?
- Are there any opportunities you can offer this summer to attempt to fill these gaps?
- How would you look at data differently?

# First Generation Scholars Network

- To join the **First Generation Scholars Network (FGSN)**, students can click the **JOIN NOW!** button on the Student Portal
- Joining allows students to:
  - Connect with an FGSN mentor
  - Find an FGSN program on campus
  - Join “check-in” events with other first-generation students
- Services are **free!**

## Join the Network

Ready to join?

You can join using our online form

**JOIN NOW!**

Have questions? Email us at

[ISAC.FirstGen@illinois.gov](mailto:ISAC.FirstGen@illinois.gov)

# The FAFSA Communication Toolkit

- Resource to assist practitioners in communication with families and best practices regarding the changes to this year's financial aid applications
- Utilize the guide's examples to connect with stakeholders:
  - Emails to families in English and Spanish
  - Email to volunteers
  - Robocall script in English and Spanish
  - Flyers
  - Social media posts in English and Spanish

Sample Student Flyer – Workshop Date

## FREE \$\$\$

We will be hosting a FREE workshop to help you complete a FAFSA® or Alternative App on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]!

Don't miss out on your opportunity to be considered for free money to pay for college.

Funds are limited, so mark your calendar!

# The FAFSA Landing Page

**There's still time to complete your FAFSA®!**

***Get money for the college program that's right for you...***

Do you know that completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) determines your eligibility not just for loans, but also for money you don't have to pay back, like federal, state, and institutional grants and scholarships!

If you had difficulty completing the FAFSA because of technical issues, note that many of these issues have been fixed. Plus, ISAC offers **one-on-one virtual meetings** to assist you in completing the application quickly and easily. Generally, we can help you complete the FAFSA in 30 minutes or less if you gather the info you need beforehand.



**Complete your  
2024-25 FAFSA**

**Complete your  
2024-25 Alternative  
Application\***

\*Please note that most students will complete the FAFSA to determine their eligibility for federal and state financial aid. The Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid is the application for eligible undocumented students to apply for state financial aid.



# We Are Here to Help!

Tommy Semanic

[Thomas.Semanic@illinois.gov](mailto:Thomas.Semanic@illinois.gov)

Beth Groves

[Elizabeth.Groves@illinois.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Groves@illinois.gov)

For training requests and questions, email:

[isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov](mailto:isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov)



The graphic features the ISAC logo (a graduation cap) and the text "ISAC CONNECTION" in large letters, with "Illinois Student Assistance Commission" in smaller text below. A blue arrow points to the right with the text "FOR COLLEGE ACCESS PRACTITIONERS". Below this is a smartphone icon with the ISAC logo and the text "TEXT US!". To the right of the phone are two speech bubbles: a white one saying "I have a question..." and a blue one saying "We have answers". Below the speech bubbles is the text "Get your questions answered by ISAC's Professional Development Team!" and the phone number "847-250-2384".

- For information on our latest trainings, visit [www.isac.org/pd](http://www.isac.org/pd)
- To receive the latest news and updates from ISAC, sign up for e-messaging at [www.isac.org/emessaging](http://www.isac.org/emessaging)