

2024



**COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING[®]
CONFERENCE**

Supporting Student Populations: Students in Foster Care, Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, and Undocumented Students

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Agenda

1. Unaccompanied & Homeless Youth
2. Students in DCFS/Foster Care
3. Undocumented Students
4. Resources

Unaccompanied & Homeless Youth

Students Experiencing Homelessness

May not consider themselves homeless or at risk of being homeless

Often unaware of available support services

Face many educational challenges due to high mobility

May be confused about their postsecondary options and accessing financial aid for college

Require additional support as they transition into their postsecondary option

Who are Students Experiencing Homelessness?

- According to the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE):
 - In the school year 2020-2021 over one million children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled in public schools
 - Being homeless at least once between 4th and 8th grade resulted in lower math scores and 5.8 fewer school days attended
 - Students living in double-up situations were associated with a greater risk for future homelessness
 - Hispanic and African-Americans were more likely to be living doubled-up

Definitions for the FAFSA

- **Homeless:** Means lacking fixed, regular, and adequate housing, which includes living in shelters, parks, motels, hotels, public spaces, camping grounds, cars, abandoned buildings, or temporary living with other people because you had no where else to go. Also, living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent, maybe considered homeless even if the parent would otherwise provide a place to live
- **Unaccompanied:** Means not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Note: homelessness, on its own, does not qualify a student as being independent for federal student aid purposes

Student Homelessness Question

- Students must have a determination from one of the sources listed below:
 - A director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, or homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness
 - Student’s high school or school district homeless liaison or designee
 - A director or designee of a director of a project supported by a federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant
 - A financial aid administrator (FAA)

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Student Other Circumstances

At any time on or after July 1, 2023, was the student unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

Yes No

Did any of the following determine the student was homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

Select all that apply.

Director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness

The student’s high school or school district homeless liaison or designee

Director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant

Financial aid administrator (FAA)

None of these apply.

Students in Foster Care



Students in Foster Care

Hesitant to share their living situations

May lack adult support

Lower rates of high school completion and employment

Less likely to earn a postsecondary degree

Require additional support as their transition to their postsecondary option



Illinois Data on Students in Foster Care

- As of July 2024, there are 18,930 youth in foster care throughout Illinois
 - 1,545 are over the age of 18
 - 3,801 are between the ages of 13-17

Foster Care Students and the FAFSA

- To be considered independent for financial aid purposes, a student must answer yes to, “ At any time since the age of 13, they were in foster care”
- If the student is unsure, they can select the info icon to find more information

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Student Personal Circumstances

Select all that apply.

- The student is currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training. ⓘ
- The student is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces. ⓘ
- At any time since the student turned 13, they were an orphan (no living biological or adoptive parent). ?
- At any time since the student turned 13, they were a ward of the court. ⓘ
- At any time since the student turned 13, they were in foster care. ⓘ
- The student is or was a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in their state of residence. ⓘ
- The student is or was in a legal guardianship with someone other than their parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in their state of residence. ⓘ
- None of these apply.

DCFS Post-Secondary Education Programs

- DCFS Scholarship
- Tuition & Fee Waiver
- Youth in College/
Vocational Training
(YIC/ VT)
- Education & Training
Voucher (ETV)



DCFS Scholarship

- **Competitive Scholarship; Must award a minimum of 53.**
- **Monthly stipend of \$1,557 up to 5 consecutive years.**
- **One-time startup funding to be used for living expenses**
- **Illinois Medical Card**
- **Reimbursement available for books not covered by financial aid grants**
- **Tuition & Mandatory fee waiver if attending Illinois state funded community colleges or universities.**



DCFS Scholarship Requirements

- **DCFS must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant, the applicant must have aged out of DCFS care at age 18 or older, or the department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant immediately prior to an adoption or guardianship being finalized.**
- **Submit a complete application. It is a one-time application if awarded the scholarship.**
- **A complete application must be submitted within application period -- January 1st to March 31st)**
- **Student needs to fulfill the following requirements to continue in the program.**
 - Submit a schedule of classes every semester showing a minimum of 12 credit hours or full-time status.
 - Submit final grades for the semester they just completed showing a minimum of 2.0 term GPA at full time status.
 - If unable to maintain full time status, student must contact YIS coordinator prior to dropping below full-time status.

Tuition & Fee Waiver

- **Tuition & Mandatory fee waiver if attending Illinois state funded community colleges or universities – school will apply MAP and/or Pell grant before applying the DCFS waiver.**
- **Department must have court ordered legal guardianship of the applicant, must have aged out of DCFS guardianship at 18 or older, or the department must have had legal guardianship prior to adoption or guardianship being finalized**
- **Applicant must have high school diploma from an accredited institution, high school equivalency certificate, or met State criteria for high school graduation before the start of the school year for which applicant is applying for waiver**
- **Applicant must have filed FAFSA**

Education & Training Voucher (ETV)

- **Youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible or who aged out of care at age 18 or older OR achieved permanency at age 16 or older through either guardianship or adoption.**
- **Up to \$5,000 to cover Cost of Attendance items such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniforms, equipment and/or transportation not covered by other grants or scholarships.**
- **Funding available through age 25 or 5 years if the student is continuing to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in the program.**
- **Award is based on Cost of Attendance and other grants/scholarships**
- **Computers allowed ONLY if schools include a computer in their Cost of Attendance and there is funding left after tuition and fees are paid (students do not receive \$5000 AND a computer).**
- **Student may attend any school that is listed as currently accredited at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/search.aspx>**

Youth in College/Vocational Training (YIC/VT)

- **DCFS must have court ordered legal responsibility for the youth; a placement for youth in care.**
- **Monthly board payment of \$1,577 for up to 5 consecutive years, once Bachelor's Degree is earned or through age 25; whichever occurs first.**
- **Reimbursement for books not covered by financial aid grants.**
- **One-time startup funding to be used for living expenses**

Youth in College requirements

- **Submit a complete application (CFS-449). It is a one-time application and must be completed by the case worker and student.**
- **Student needs to fulfill the following requirements to continue in the program.**
 - Submit a schedule of classes every semester showing a minimum of 12 credit hours or full-time status.
 - Submit final grades for the semester they just completed showing a minimum of 2.0 term GPA at full time status.
 - If unable to maintain full time status, student must contact YIC coordinator prior to dropping below full-time status.

Undocumented Students



Psychological Impacts of Status

May be unaware of their status

Stress due to the college and financial aid application process

Constant fear of deportation (own deportation or family's)

Uncertainty over obtaining employment

Anxiety, depression, fear associated with status and social stigma of being undocumented



Understanding Various Immigrant Statuses

- **Naturalized Citizen**
 - Born outside the U.S., applied and received US citizenship
 - Cannot be US president
 - **Legal Resident**
 - U.S. permanent resident (LPR), conditional resident, or having other visa permitting residence in the US
 - Cannot vote and cannot be selected for jury duty
 - **Undocumented**
 - Citizen of a country other than the United States and
 - Entered the US “without inspection” or
 - Visa expired and remained in the US
- Note:** DACA is not an official immigrant status



Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

- June 15, 2012 – Executive order issued to implement DACA
 - 2-year stay from deportation (Deferred Action)
 - Work permit & social security number (SSN) for work purposes
 - Not a pathway to citizenship and can be eliminated at any time
- Students with DACA are not eligible for Federal Student Aid (FSA)
 - For the citizenship question in the FAFSA the student must select, **“Neither U.S. citizen nor eligible noncitizen”**
- DACA’s future is unclear and even if it remains in place as is, the number of individuals who benefit will decrease over time
 - Given the requirement to have entered the U.S. prior to June 15, 2007, and to be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012



Undocumented Students and Recent Arrivals in Illinois

- Illinois is ranked #5 with the number of undocumented students in higher education
- 20,151 undocumented students in Illinois
 - 2,000 graduate high school every year
- Since August 2022, nearly 40,000 asylum seekers have arrived in Chicago
 - Asylum seekers are not eligible for FSA

Eligibility for Non-U.S. Citizens

Eligible for the FAFSA

- U.S. Permanent Resident Card
- Conditional Green Card
- Holder of Arrival Departure Record (I-94 Form) from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing one of these statuses:
 - Refugee
 - Asylum Granted
 - Parolee – paroled for a minimum of one year and has not expired
 - Cuban-Haitian Entrant
- T-Visa Holder (T-1, T-2, T-3, etc.)
- Battered Immigrant-Qualified Alien and has documentation from DHS

Not eligible for the FAFSA

- Common ineligible statuses that some of your students may have
 - I-94 forms stamped with another endorsement not found in the eligible noncitizen section such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS),
 - J-1, J-2 Visas,
 - F-1, F-2 Visas,
 - DACA or
 - U-Visa holders
- While these students are not eligible for federal student aid, they **may** be eligible for state financial aid



Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act Eligibility Criteria

Provides a pathway for eligible undocumented students who are disqualified for FSA to apply to state financial aid programs:

1. Resided with their parent or guardian while attending a public or private high school in this State;
2. Graduated from a public or private high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this State;
3. Attended school in this State for at least 3 years as of the date the individual graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this State;
4. Provides an affidavit stating that they will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States at the earliest opportunity they are eligible to do so;
5. Has not established a residence outside of Illinois



Alternative Application

- Available for eligible students to apply for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant
 - Students eligible for the FAFSA should not complete the Alt App
- Prescreening questions are built into the application to determine eligibility
- The application is patterned after the FAFSA:
 - A Student Aid Index (SAI) is calculated
 - Opens the same time as the FAFSA



How do students and parents sign their financial aid applications?

FAFSA

- The FSA ID is needed to renew the FAFSA every year
 - Students and parents must each have their own FSA ID
 - Parents who do not have an SSN can **now** obtain one
 - Those unable to answer the identity verification questions will need to complete the manual verification process

Alternative App

- Students and parents must have their own PIN
- The PIN will be generated and sent via email by ISAC
- A PIN is needed every time you renew the Alternative App
- To obtain a PIN, parents only need to provide an email



Working with Mixed-Status Families

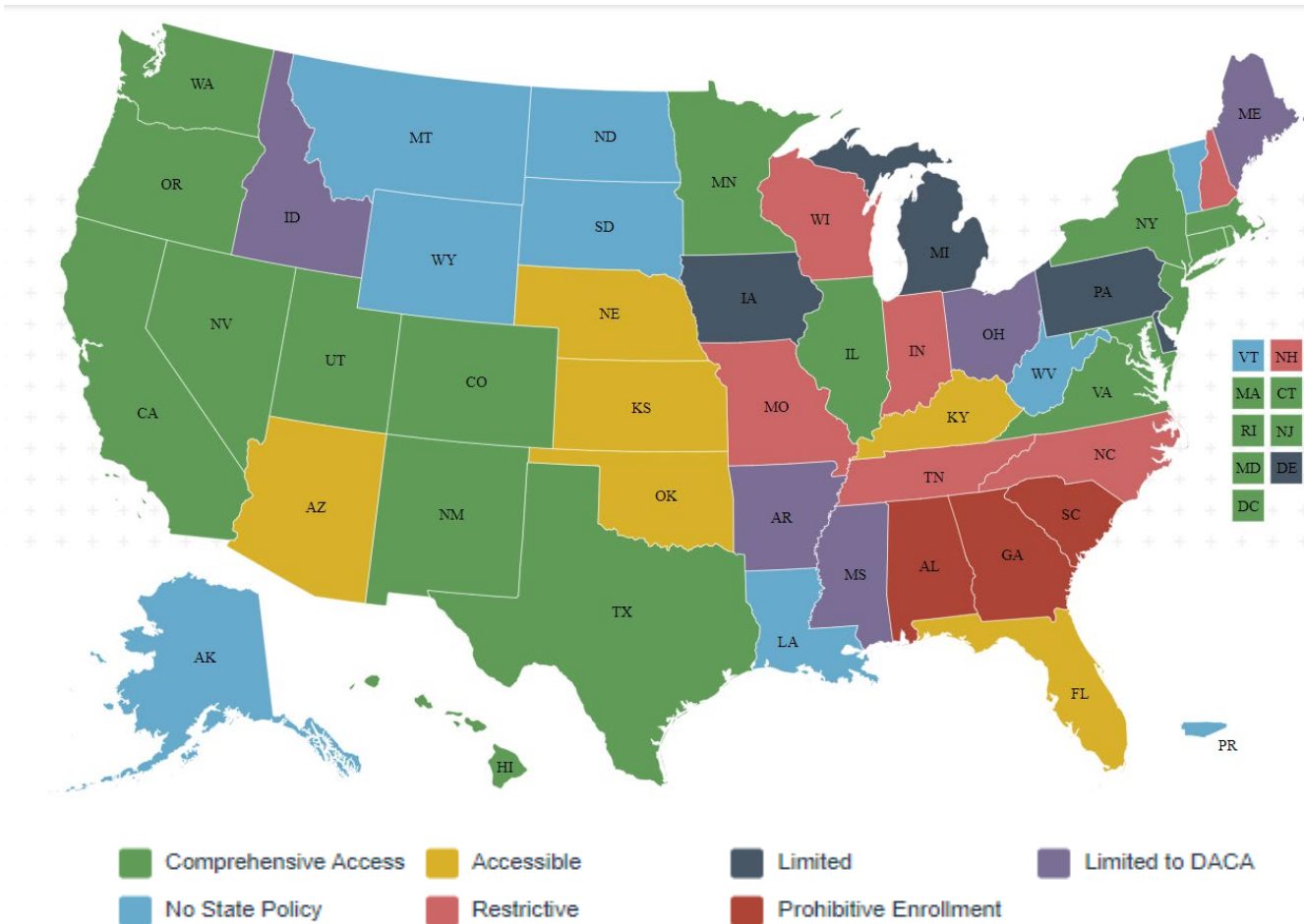
- Refers to students that are either:
 - Undocumented: but have family members that are U.S. Citizens or U.S. Residents, and/or
 - U.S. Citizens or U.S. Residents: but have family members that are undocumented
- Parent immigration status ***does not impact student financial aid eligibility*** of either the FAFSA or Alternative Application
- It is important to know the student's status to determine which financial aid application they should complete



Key Illinois Legislation

- IL Public Act 93-0007 2003 (Acevedo Bill)
 - Grants in-state tuition to qualifying undocumented immigrants at 2-year/4-year public institutions
- IL Dream Act 2011
 - Access to 529 Savings Plan & private IL Dream Fund Scholarship
- Professional Licensure 2019
 - Ability to utilize ITIN (individual Taxpayer Identification Number) to apply for the professional license required for their field of study
- RISE Act 2019
 - Provides access to ISAC and other state financial aid programs to qualifying undocumented immigrants
- HB3438 Undocumented Student Liaison 2022
 - Places a liaison within each 2-year/4-year institutions to help undocumented students navigate degree completion

Tuition & Financial Aid Equity for Undocumented Students



Resources



Best Practices

- Refrain from using outdated/offensive language
 - Match the language that the students uses
- Learn the legislation and policies that can impact your work with your students
- Establish a broad network of partners who you can tap into for advice and to send off your students for support services and resources
 - (E.g., tax experts, immigration attorneys, etc.)



Support Services for Homeless and Foster Youth

- [Illinois HOUSE Liaisons](#)
 - Each public and private institution of higher education in Illinois is required to designate a member of staff to serve as a liaison to students experiencing homelessness
- [Benefits Navigator](#)
 - Each public and private institution of higher education in Illinois is required to designate a member of staff to help students in need to determine eligibility for benefits programs and identify campus wide and community resource support
- [Youth in Care – College Advocate Program](#)
 - Launched in the 2023-2024 school year in partnership with Foster Progress that provides youth with foster care experience ongoing support throughout college



Support Services for Undocumented Students

- [Undocumented Student Resource Liaison](#)
 - Each public and private institution of higher education in Illinois is required to designate a member of staff who will assist undocumented students and mixed status households with navigating access to resources on college campuses
- Resource Center on Campus
 - Some institutions may have also created a specialized resource center for undocumented students
 - Northern Illinois University (NIU) has created an Undocumented Student Resource Center – *the first and only* in Illinois

Contact Information & Virtual Office Hours



**V I R T U A L
O F F I C E
H O U R S**

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Each Thursday 3:00-5:00 pm

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m32c4e7e619de1abc0a9950ce1ff6f02c>

We Are Here to Help!

- Text us your name to get started!
- Questions? Contact:
 - Manuel Talavera
 - 312-590-7527 or Manuel.Talavera@illinois.gov
- For information on our latest trainings, visit www.isac.org/pd
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The banner features the ISAC logo (a graduation cap with an upward arrow) and the text "ISAC CONNECTION" in large, bold letters. Below this, it says "Illinois Student Assistance Commission" in smaller text. A blue arrow points to the right with the text "FOR COLLEGE ACCESS PRACTITIONERS". On the left, a smartphone displays the ISAC logo and the text "TEXT US!". To the right of the phone, there are two speech bubbles: a white one saying "I have a question..." and a blue one saying "We have answers". Below the speech bubbles, the text reads "Get your questions answered by ISAC's Professional Development Team!" and the phone number "847-250-2384".