

February 2009



Monetary Award Program Evaluation

Illinois' Monetary Award Program (MAP) Helps Illinois Students

The Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) helps financially needy students obtain the postsecondary training and skills they desire. The education and abilities acquired by MAP recipients benefit both the recipients themselves and society as a whole. Before MAP was created, many qualified Illinois students were deterred from enrolling in college because of financial considerations, a situation on which today's skyrocketing cost of higher education continues to have an impact. Providing financial grants to needy students eases the economic barriers to education and engenders student success. MAP has been in existence in its current form since 1967, and remains one of the largest programs of state-funded, need-based grant aid in the country. In FY2008, more than 145,000 needy undergraduate students received more than \$383 million in MAP grants.

MAP Award Data FY2008

	Number of awards	\$ awarded (in millions)
Public 4-year	42,724	149.0
Public 2-year	56,679	56.6
Private 4-year	36,569	148.3
Private 2-year	1,921	6.6
Hospital	849	3.0
Proprietary	<u>6,801</u>	<u>20.3</u>
	145,543	383.8
Dependent recipients		54%
Independent recipients		46%
Freshmen		37%
Sophomores		25%
Upperclassmen		28%
Percent of recipients with a zero EFC		44%
Mean taxable income of recipients		\$23,558

Purpose of Evaluation

This evaluation is intended to provide the General Assembly with information regarding students who receive grants from the State through the Monetary Award Program (MAP) to help pay their college expenses. The importance of grant aid has become increasingly apparent in recent years as the gap between college costs and family resources has continued to widen, especially for lower-income families. In these difficult economic times, the efforts of Illinois to support its citizens as they strive to better themselves and enhance their skills are critical. Illinois' investment in MAP has been crucial for thousands of Illinois students, helping them to close the gap between costs and resources, and allowing them to access the postsecondary education of their choice.

Receiving a Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant...

“The MAP grant has been extremely helpful financially, which in turn has helped me to focus more on my studies and worry less about the cost of my college education.”

Amelia, MAP Grant Recipient

MAP Longitudinal Study

For the past six years, ISAC has been conducting a longitudinal study of MAP recipients. As shown at right, MAP recipients have a range of incomes, but all are considered to have limited financial resources for college. Three groups of MAP recipients, along with a fourth group of students who did not receive MAP (a control group), were randomly selected for a survey six years ago when they began their college careers. A total of 1,935 dependent students and 1,620 independent students responded to the initial survey and were subsequently tracked for the study. The students have been asked a number of questions designed to assess their patterns of enrollment and academic success. The sixth survey of these groups is currently being administered. The data in this report is based on the first five years of survey responses and school attendance patterns for these students.

MAP Recipients by Income Level FY08

<u>Income</u>	<u>Number of Recipients</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than \$20,000	69,613	47.8
\$20,000 to \$30,000	24,016	16.5
\$30,000 to \$40,000	18,272	12.6
\$40,000 to \$60,000	22,780	15.7
More than \$60,000	<u>10,862</u>	7.5
	145,543	

Higher income families receiving MAP typically have multiple children in college.

Where Study Participants Went to School

Of the 1,935 dependent students tracked in the study, 44 percent were first generation college students, meaning neither of their parents attended college. Of those with incomes under \$20,000, 63 percent were first generation students. The schools these students attended were evaluated and ranked as highly selective, selective, somewhat selective, or open admission. Community colleges were treated as a separate group. Despite the large percentage of first generation students in the study and the presumed corresponding lack of college experience, MAP recipients chose to attend colleges of roughly the same type as freshmen overall in Illinois. This suggests strong similarities between the college aspirations and goals of MAP recipients and those of other students in Illinois. It also indicates MAP helps students attend the college of their choice.

School attended by selectivity: Study students compared to all Illinois students

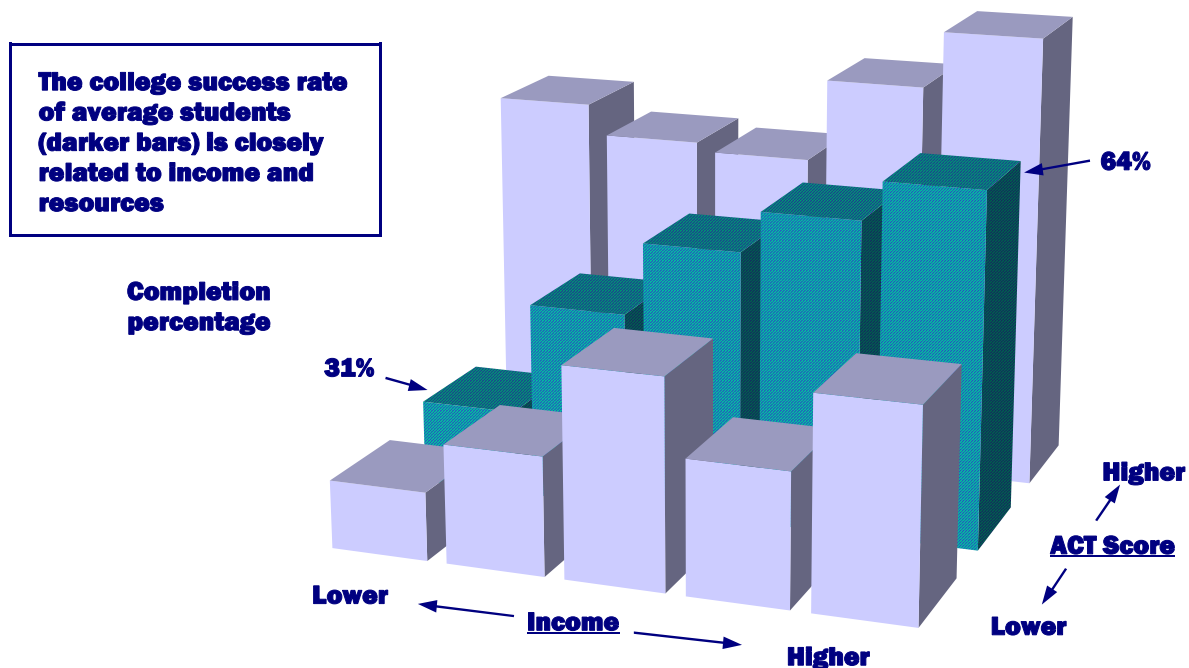
<u>School Type</u>	<u>MAP Recipients</u>	<u>Illinois Students</u>
Highly selective	20%	17%
Selective	30%	23%
Somewhat Selective	17%	15%
Open Admission	10%	7%
Community Colleges	23%	38%

The percentage of MAP recipients at community colleges is lower than the proportion of all students at community colleges because students enrolled on a part-time basis at a community college often don't apply for financial aid.

Continued Support Needed for Student Success

Some national research has found that lower income students and less-prepared students do not complete their education and obtain a postsecondary credential at the same rate as higher income students or more well-prepared students. As measured by ACT scores, better prepared students generally succeed at a higher rate in college nationally than less-prepared students, regardless of income. In Illinois, previous studies of low-income MAP recipients showed MAP recipients graduate at about the same rate as higher income students when controlling for test scores or school choice. For the students in this study, the rate of postsecondary completion for students with ACT scores of less than 20 increased somewhat by income level, but the overall completion rate was poor. Only about 25 percent of low ACT score students from the lowest income families and less than half of students from higher income families completed their education in 5 years. Students with high ACT scores (above 23) enjoy considerable success in college across the board, regardless of income level. For the average Illinois student, however, - those with an ACT score between 20 and 23 (the statewide average is 20.7), shown in the darker bars on the graph below - completion percentages are closely related to income. For average Illinois students, having more resources to meet college costs makes them more likely to complete their education. The decrease in “purchasing power” of the MAP grant is a likely cause of this difference in completion rates. When asked what the biggest hurdle was to college completion, over 75 percent of survey respondents indicated “paying for college.” Surveyed students who did complete their education indicated MAP was vital part of meeting college expenses. With the recent changes in the national economy, and the impact this has had and will have on Illinois, continued support for MAP will be crucial in order to ensure Illinois students with the drive to succeed in higher education are given the help they need.

Percentage of Studied Students Obtaining Any Postsecondary Credential in Five Years By Income and ACT Score Group



What Students Say About MAP

“Receiving the Illinois Monetary Award Program grant has had a very positive impact on my educational career”

Lauretta

“[The MAP grant] has allowed me to continue my education”

Crystal

“[The MAP grant] helped me pay my way.”

Ashley

“This award has made it possible for me to get an education and hopefully help me get a good job.”

Will

“Lessened the financial stress on me and my parents. It let them realize the dream of me graduating with little or no student debt.”

Jennifer

“The MAP grant allowed me to take full-time classes and not go over my budget on other things”

Winnie



ISAC Overview

As the primary administrator for student financial aid in Illinois, ISAC awarded more than \$430 million to more than 205,000 students through grants and scholarships, in FY2007-08, and guaranteed loans for more than 200,000 students for more than \$1.2 billion through the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. ISAC's innovative Capstone Loan Program originated more than 700 loans in 2007-08, providing \$5 million to Illinois borrowers trying to reach their educational goals. In 2007-08, the *College Illinois!*SM prepaid tuition program paid more than \$38 million in benefits for students and to date has helped students at more than 600 colleges and universities in Illinois and across the nation. At the heart of these programs is the need-based Monetary Award Program, one of the most important student financial aid programs available to Illinois families.

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