

2024 Legislative Agenda

The Coalition for Transforming Higher Education (CTHEF) Funding is a group of advocates across Illinois who come together to champion policies that direct more resources to colleges that serve Black, Latinx, low-income, rural and first-generation college students and legislation that increases investment in higher education.



AFFORDABILITY

Invest an additional \$50 million in the Monetary Award Program to help more students enroll and persist

Every year, more than 140,000 Illinois students from low-income backgrounds depend on the state Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant for the financial support they need to enroll and persist in college. In FY 2022, MAP grants covered 100% of tuition and fees for all eligible public university students. The Governor's Office has proposed, and the General Assembly has approved, historic investments in MAP, increasing it by 77% since 2019. However, the grants still only cover 50% of the tuition and fees for public university students in FY24.

While the Coalition appreciates these past historic investments, the Governor's proposed MAP increase of \$10 million is insufficient to serve all students who qualify and does not keep up with inflation. To best serve all students from low-income backgrounds who rely on MAP, the Coalition is asking the state to invest an additional \$50 million in MAP for FY25, giving hundreds of additional dollars to each student and bringing the average award above \$3,500 for the first time. Smaller increases, as the Governor has proposed, are not enough, and we need to continue to bring down the price of college and increase the number of students attending our state's colleges and universities.



ACCESS

Ensure adequate and equitable funding for Illinois colleges and universities in FY25

To revitalize our public university system, we must go beyond investing in need-based grants for students and change how we fund our institutions. The Commission on Equitable Public University Funding submitted recommendations to the General Assembly in March 2024 on how to fund public universities adequately, equitably, and stably. Once recommendations are finalized, the Coalition will work with external partners and Commission Legislative Co-Chairs Senator Kimberly Lightford and Representative Carol Ammons to file a funding formula bill in the 103rd General Assembly. This would represent the first time that Illinois has a formula for the distribution of state appropriations to public universities.

Invest in Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act (MHEACA)

In 2019, Illinois state legislators unanimously passed the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act (MHEACA), which created new requirements for public colleges and universities to address gaps in mental health services for students through training, peer support, community-campus partnerships, and more. However, for colleges to begin to provide these services, legislators need to fund the MHEACA. As the FY25 budget is being drafted, it must include \$22.2 million for MHEACA, a Commission on Government Accountability and Forecasting calculation based on how much funding all public colleges and universities require to successfully implement the Act and better support students' mental health.

Fund the Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) scholarship at \$8M in FY25

To continue adequately serving prospective teachers of color, therefore strengthening the diversity of the state's educator workforce, Illinois should continue to fund MTI at \$8 million. An \$8 million appropriation in FY25 allows MTI to support at least 1,066 future teachers of color and ensures that all eligible applicants continue to receive scholarships, helping to close the gap between the number of eligible applicants and the number of students that receive MTI funding. The MTI scholarship enables more candidates of color to become teachers which is sorely needed for Illinois, where students of color account for more than half of all PreK-12 students but less than 20% of the teachers supporting them are of color. This is a missed opportunity when a growing body of research highlights the academic and non-academic benefits of all students having teachers of color, with particular benefits for students of color.

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