



Supporting Illinois' College Students

Higher Education Budget Advocacy
Toolkit for FY26

The Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding is calling on advocates to raise your voice and tell our lawmakers that adequate and equitable funding in Illinois' higher education system is crucial.

Join the Coalition as we advocate for:

- **Prioritizing a \$73 million increase into the Monetary Award Program (MAP) to make college affordable for Illinois students**
A MAP increase of \$73 million will help make college more affordable for MAP eligible students by increasing the total grant amount awarded to eligible applicants. An increase also continues the trend from the last three years to serve all eligible applicants.
- **Passing a student-focused, university funding formula to fix the inequities in how Illinois funds its four-year public institutions**
Since 2000, state appropriations to public universities have been cut by 46%. This means that students and their families are increasingly burdened by the cost of higher tuition and fees. Illinois needs a data-driven funding model proposed in these bills that underscores the resources individual universities need to fulfill their missions and ensure their respective student bodies can thrive.

We encourage you to customize the letters, social media posts, and messages in this toolkit and share why these investments are critical to you and your community.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT



Send a Letter to the Governor Reach out to your state senator and representative directly to let them know why they must prioritize this investment.



Join Us on Social Media Reference the bank of tweets on the following pages for suggestions.

Share The Message Widely Share this toolkit and messages with members of your community!

RESOURCES

Use these **talking points** to help with talking to your network and elected officials about why this is important.



Read and share information from these **1-pagers** about MAP and how the equity-driven, student-centered funding formula works, as proposed in SB 13.

Ongoing Actions

[Click to Edit and Send a Letter to the Governor Suggested/ Drafted Letter](#)

Dear Governor Pritzker,

As a [share a little about your identity as it relates to higher education e.g. concerned student, parent, educator, citizen of Illinois], I am urging you to pass SB 13 to fix the deeply embedded equity issues present in our public 4-year universities. These inequities did not arise overnight; they are the outcome of decades of declining state appropriations and the lack of a funding model. We must do better.

Since 2000, state appropriations to public universities have been cut by 46%. This means that students and their families are increasingly burdened by rises in tuition and fees. Research shows that students of color and students of low-income backgrounds are disproportionately harmed by these rising costs. For too long, the state of Illinois has accepted that one university has over \$12,000 to spend per student on academic and student supports while another only has \$5,000 per student. This means that the current system does not benefit all students. [speak to some of the barriers you have experienced or witnessed regarding entering college and/or persisting once enrolled]

Illinois needs a data driven funding model that underscores the resources individual universities need to fulfill their missions and ensure their respective student bodies can thrive. SB 13 provides just that.

We know that higher education opens doors to increased civic engagement, economic growth, and professional opportunities. Our students deserve to access these opportunities without being financially burdened by rising costs. SB 13 has the power to transform higher education funding, allowing Illinois a critical opportunity to alter the landscape in which universities exist.

We will be paying attention on February 19 and hope to hear that you will support the passage of SB 13. Thank you for working to ensure that our universities have the resources needed to help their students succeed.

Sincerely,
[insert your full name]

[Click to Edit and Send this Letter](#)

Ongoing Actions

Join Us on Social Media—Raise your Voices Online for Higher Education!

Join us for a series of ongoing social media actions to show your support and share your stories of the need for Governor Pritzker to prioritize equity in higher education funding for FY26.

Please tweet using #TransformILHigherEd to help keep the momentum going.

Suggested Social Media Posts

JANUARY 23



Illinois students have what it takes! Invest in making sure the college opportunity is accessible for all of them, @GovPritzker. We're calling on you to prioritize #highered equity, affordability, and access FY26! #MAPMatters #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

JANUARY 28



@GovPritzker, a college degree remains the surest way to greater social mobility, and #BILL will ensure more Illinoisans have access to that pathway. #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

JANUARY 29



@GovPritzker, Illinois will be winning when it prioritizes an adequate and equitable funding approach for its public universities. Support #SB13 #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

Suggested Social Media Posts, Cont'd

FEBRUARY 4

THE CHALLENGE

Illinois' current approach to funding its public universities **ignores the data, is highly political, and bakes in existing resource inequities across universities**, limiting access to the types of supports and services that help students persist and graduate.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

LEARN MORE
transformhigheredil.org

Coalition for Transforming Higher Education FUNDING

Illinois' current approach for funding its public 4-years isn't working. @GovPritzker, you have a chance to change that. Support #SB13 #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

FEBRUARY 5

Over 50% of Latinx students and over 60% of Black students at IL public universities rely on MAP.

50%
LATINX STUDENTS

60%
BLACK STUDENTS

Coalition for Transforming Higher Education FUNDING

Over 50% of IL public university undergraduates who identify as Latinx and over 60% of Black students rely on MAP. Prioritize a \$73M increase in MAP so that college is affordable for all IL students. #MAPMatters

[Click to Tweet](#)

FEBRUARY 11

Access to, and success in, higher education for all students requires investment in financial aid and institutions

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING Is key to ensuring institutions can provide **adequate academic, mental health, and other supports** to equip their students to complete college

FINANCIAL AID Is key to making **higher education affordable for all students**, but does not directly fund the services institutions are able to provide

#transformILhigherEd

Coalition for Transforming Higher Education FUNDING

MAP funding and state appropriations to our public universities are 2 essential tools for realizing greater college access and affordability. @GovPritzker, It's crucial that Illinois invest in both. #MAPMatters #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

FEBRUARY 12

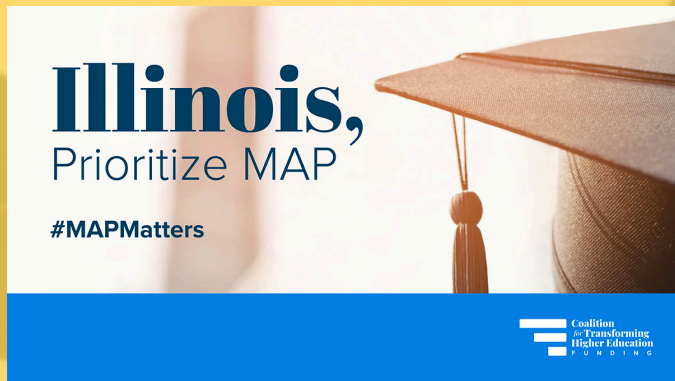
Approximately **58%** of MAP recipients are **first-generation**

Coalition for Transforming Higher Education FUNDING

MAP is a significant source of support for #firstgen students. Prioritize a \$73M increase in MAP so that every student has affordable access to a college degree. #MAPMatters

[Click to Tweet](#)

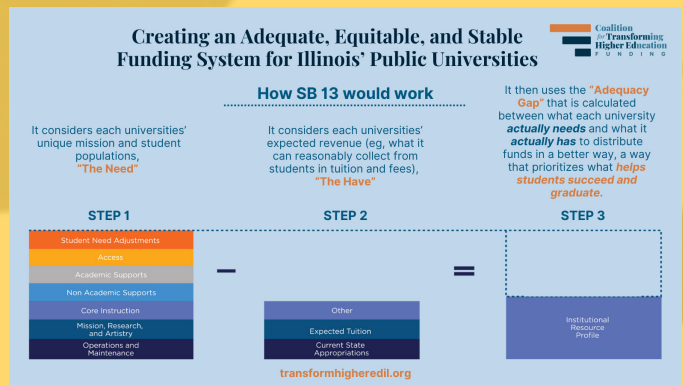
FEBRUARY 18



Continued investments in MAP are necessary to ensure all MAP-eligible students in Illinois have access to higher education now more than ever. @GovPritzker, prioritize a \$73M increase in MAP. #MAPMatters

[Click to Tweet](#)

FEBRUARY 19

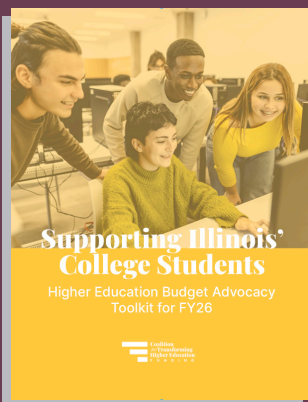


.@GovPritzker, Illinois will be winning when it prioritizes an adequate and equitable funding approach for its public universities. Support #SB13

[Click to Tweet](#)

We can transform higher education in Illinois by ensuring every student seeking to earn a degree can do so affordably and has the services and supports they need to succeed.

COALITION FOR TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING



Share The Message Widely!

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QUESTIONS?

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