



**DEGREES OF CHANGE**

# Higher Education Advocacy **DAY**

**MARCH 18, 2025**

**POWERED BY:**



**Coalition  
for Transforming  
Higher Education  
FUNDING**



## Today's Schedule

Subject to Change

Time	Task	Location
9:30-10 a.m.	Arrival in Springfield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security screening</li> <li>• Restroom break</li> </ul>	Illinois State Capitol Building
10:15 a.m.	State Capitol Tour & Photos	Illinois State Capitol Building
11-11:50 a.m.	Lunch	Stratton Cafeteria Basement
12-12:30 p.m.	Higher Education Advocacy Rally	Lincoln Statue (outdoors) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Weather location</del> Illinois State Museum Auditorium</li> </ul>
12:30 p.m.	Group photo	Lincoln Statue (outdoors) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Weather location</del> Illinois State Museum Auditorium</li> </ul>
1-4:30 p.m.	Advocacy & Legislative Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocates may sit in the House or Senate gallery for floor debate</li> <li>• Scheduled committee hearings</li> <li>• Legislative meetings</li> </ul>	Illinois State Capitol Building
4:30 p.m.	Departure from Springfield	Buses depart from 2nd Street

# About the Coalition

The Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding brings together community members from across the state of Illinois to advocate for a public university system that is equipped to meet the diverse needs of its students.

The Coalition believes that if we advance a public university funding model that prioritizes equity, then we will see enhancements statewide through better-resourced institutions serving more representative student populations. Through our advocacy, we work to ensure that higher education in Illinois is accessible and affordable for Illinois students.

Illinois has experienced a significant disinvestment in higher education through the years, impacting Black, Latinx, and students of low-income backgrounds the most. After years of advocacy by higher education advocates, the Illinois General Assembly passed Senate Bill 815 in 2021 creating the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding to recommend at a minimum “specific data-driven criteria and approaches to the General Assembly to adequately, equitably, and stably fund public universities in this State and to evaluate existing funding methods.”

In response to the growing need to rally higher education funding equity champions, the Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding was formed. Our efforts include ensuring financial support is offered directly to students through grants such as the Monetary Award Program (MAP) and that institutions in Illinois are provided with the resources needed to meet the needs of the whole student.

The core Coalition member organizations include:



# From the Coalition Principals

Dear Advocate,

Welcome to **Degrees of Change: Higher Education Advocacy Day!** Today, we unite with a shared mission: to champion equitable, student-centered funding for Illinois public universities.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your presence and dedication to this cause. Your participation today is instrumental in driving the change we seek. As you navigate the historic halls of the Illinois State Capitol, seize the opportunity to engage with lawmakers, share compelling narratives, and deepen your understanding of our legislative process. Your firsthand experiences today will illuminate the path from policy proposal to enacted law, underscoring the power of informed advocacy.

Our collective efforts are currently focused on the passage of House Bill 1581, introduced by Representative Carol Ammons, and Senate Bill 13, introduced by Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford. These pivotal pieces of legislation aim to establish a student-centered, equitable funding formula for Illinois public universities, ensuring that all students have access to affordable, high-quality higher education.

In addition to these critical bills, we advocate for increased investment in the Monetary Award Program (MAP), which provides need-based grants to low-income college students. Expanding MAP funding will enable more students to pursue higher education without the burden of financial constraints.

We also emphasize the importance of funding mental health services on campuses. The Mental Health Early Action on Campus (MHEAC) Act aims to address mental health service needs through training, peer support, and community-campus partnerships. Supporting this initiative ensures that students receive the mental health care they need to succeed academically and personally.

Furthermore, we advocate for the preservation and investment in the Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program. 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 this vital support.

# From the Coalition Principals

Remember, each conversation you initiate and every story you convey has the potential to influence decisions that will shape the future of higher education in our state. Your dedication amplifies the voices of countless students seeking accessible and quality education.

Together, we are the catalysts for change. Let's harness this day to inspire action, foster understanding, and drive the transformation our educational system needs. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and passion.

Let's make a lasting impact today!

## MEET THE COALITION PRINCIPALS:



**Robin Steans**  
President  
Advance Illinois



**Cherita Ellens**  
President & CEO  
Women Employed



**Ralph Martire**  
Executive Director  
CTBA



**Erick Deshaun Dorris**  
Regional Director  
Young Invincibles



**Lisa Castillo Richmond**  
Executive Director  
PCC

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.

Throughout the 2025 legislative session, the Coalition is advocating for two ways to remedy the deeply embedded equity issues present in our public four-year universities.



## **ACCESS & PERSISTENCE**

### **PASS THE ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE FUNDING FORMULA FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ACT (SB 13 / HB 1581)**

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 the data-driven, student-focused 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.

To revitalize the state's public university system, Illinois must go beyond investing in need-based grants for students and change how the four-year public institutions are funded. This legislation would represent the first time that Illinois has a formula for the distribution of state appropriations to public universities. The Commission on Equitable Public University Funding submitted recommendations on how to fund public universities adequately, equitably, and stably to the General Assembly in March 2024. Commission Legislative Co-Chairs Senator Kimberly Lightford and Representative Carol Ammons filed the funding formula bill in the 103rd and 104th General Assemblies.



## **AFFORDABILITY**

### **INVEST IN THE MONETARY AWARD PROGRAM (MAP)**

For many Illinoisans, college is out of reach without substantial financial aid. In 1967, Illinois created the Monetary Award Program (MAP) with the intent of covering the full cost of tuition at Illinois public colleges for all students from low-income families. But lagging state investment has led to a crisis for MAP and Illinois students. MAP is currently the single most powerful vehicle this state has to address affordability in an equitable way.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) recommends a \$73 million increase into MAP, which will help make college more affordable for MAP-eligible students by increasing the total grant amount awarded. An increase also continues the trend from the last several years to serve all eligible applicants. The Coalition comes alongside ISAC to ask state legislature to approve this increase into MAP, which will better support students and create greater affordability overall.

# The Time Is Now:

## Adequately and Equitably Funding Our Public Universities (SB13/HB1581)

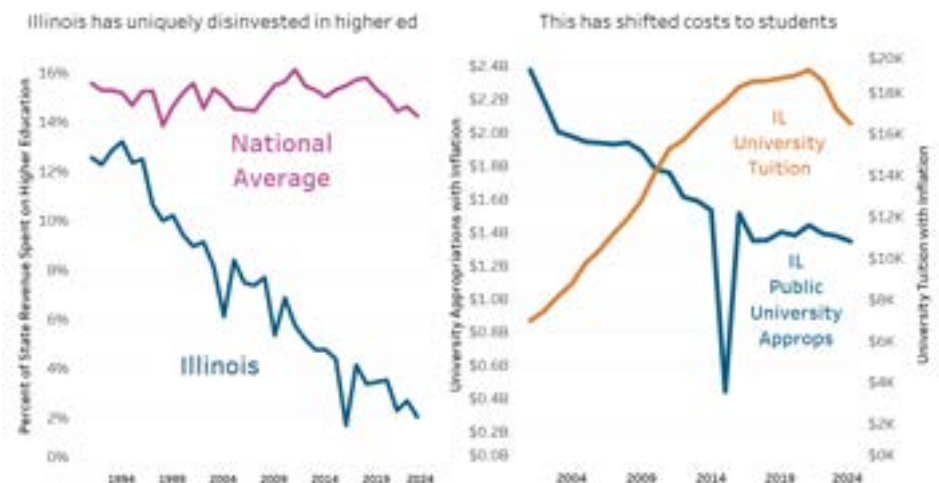
Illinois' future is deeply tied to the strength of its higher education system. However, this system is facing challenges due to outdated, inadequate, and inequitable funding practices. SB13/HB1581 aims to address these issues by proposing a new funding formula for public colleges and universities. Since 2002, Illinois has decreased its funding for public universities by 46% (adjusted for inflation). The current process does not have a funding model, and the allocation of new funds is driven by political negotiations. The current process is criticized for:

- **Ignoring actual costs:** It doesn't consider the real expenses involved in providing quality education to all students (e.g., academic support for curriculum design, academic advising, career services, tutoring, emergency aid, student mental health support, services related to housing, transportation, and child care).
- **Disregarding student needs:** It fails to account for the varying needs of different student populations across institutions.
- **Exacerbating disparities:** It creates unequal funding allocations, leading to disparities in academic and student support services across institutions.

**The proposed bill seeks to create a more adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding model that better supports students and institutions.**

Inequitable and inadequate funding particularly harms Illinois' Black and Latinx students, students from low-income households, students from rural communities, and other students who are historically excluded from or underserved by higher education.

This inadequate and inequitable funding not only affects student outcomes but also hinders the overall growth and development of Illinois' public universities to contribute to and serve their communities well into the future.



## List of Illinois' Public Colleges and Universities

- Chicago State University
- Eastern Illinois University
- Governors State University
- Illinois State University
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Northern Illinois University
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
- University of Illinois Chicago
- University of Illinois Springfield
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Western Illinois University

## WHAT THE BILL DOES

This bill aims to ensure that all public universities in Illinois receive the funding they need to serve their students effectively. It proposes a new funding formula that:

- Calculates a fair funding target (“Adequacy Target”) for each university based on its students’ needs and mission.
- Assesses the resources each university already has - including current state funding, equitable student share, and other resources like private gifts.
- Allocates new funds based on how much each university needs to reach its funding target, prioritizing those with the largest gap between what they have and what they need.

THE PERCENTAGE FUNDED AT INSTITUTIONS RANGE FROM 39%-92% AND HIGHLIGHT THE CLEAR NEED FOR A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION



## DEFINITIONS

“Adequacy Target” means the amount of funding a public university needs to cover the expenses of instruction and student services, their unique research and public service mission, and operations and maintenance, all tied to their student body and aligned with the supports needed to close gaps in enrollment, retention, or completion for underserved students.

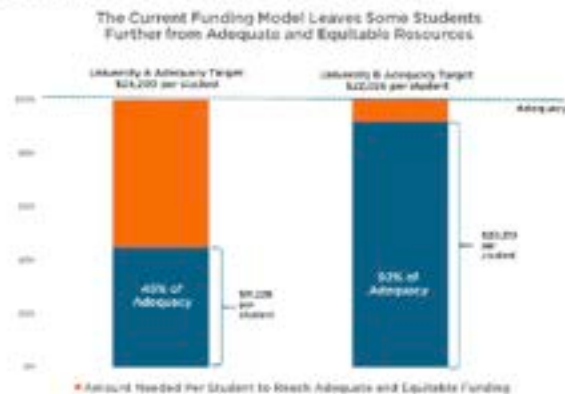
“Equitable Student Share” is a calculation to determine how much of a university’s adequacy target should be covered by tuition and fees from the overall student body. This calculation is based on factors like the characteristics of the student body. By using this calculation, the bill aims to eventually shift more of the funding burden from students to the state with the goal that students will pay less in tuition and fees, making higher education more affordable for everyone.

## THE IMPACT ON STUDENTS

**Current Students** - Once passed and funded, the formula will provide additional funding for academic and non-academic supports at all of the public universities across the state each fiscal year.

**Future Students** - With increases in equitable state appropriations we can expect tuition and fee increases to stabilize making higher education more affordable for students.

The proposed model would use each institution's adequacy gap, or how far they are from full funding, to determine how new funds would be prioritized.



The allocation is based on two things:

- A guardrail that would be allocated through an across-the-board increase
- The absolute and relative size of a university's adequacy gap (the area in blue)

The goal is that most of the resources goes to institutions that are the farthest from adequacy.

## Supported By:





# INVESTING IN THE MONETARY AWARD PROGRAM (MAP)

## All students deserve an affordable education!

For many Illinoisans, college is out of reach without substantial financial aid. In 1967, Illinois created the Monetary Award Program (MAP) with the intent of covering the full cost of tuition at Illinois public colleges for all students from low-income families. But lagging state investment has led to a crisis for MAP and Illinois students.

**MAP is currently the single most powerful vehicle this state has to address affordability in an equitable way, providing grants to support:**



### Racial Equity

Over 60% of Latinx students and over 65% of Black students at Illinois public universities rely on MAP.



### First-Generation Students

58% of MAP recipients are first-generation college students.



### Students from Low-Income Households

The average household income of MAP recipients is barely above poverty line for a family of four.

## Investing in MAP is a critical investment in Illinois and our future.

**However, MAP's impact has been reduced by rising tuition costs due to underfunding.**

While recent years have seen investments into the program, those investments have not been enough to support all students across the state who rely on MAP to fund their college education.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) recommends a \$73 million increase into MAP, which will help make college more affordable for MAP-eligible students by increasing the total grant amount awarded. An increase also continues the trend from the last several years to serve all eligible applicants.

The Coalition comes alongside ISAC to ask the state legislature to approve this increase into MAP, which will better support students and create greater affordability overall.

**Make Your Voice Heard: Contact your state legislator  
about the importance of investing into MAP!**

Occasionally, members of the Illinois General Assembly will ask difficult questions of advocates. Sometimes, these questions are intended to better understand your position on complex issues. Other times, they are meant to turn attention away from the issues you care about. Either way, it's important that advocates are prepared for how to answer.

Given the challenging budget year we are in, you should be prepared to answer the following questions (or those like them). No matter what an elected official says, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- You can and should focus on your experience and what you need when talking with your elected officials. If you get a tough question, you can always think like a politician and avoid the question!
- You are not expected to be an expert in higher education policy or any other policy. If you get policy questions, you can lean on anyone from one of the sponsor organizations. It's also completely fine to say you don't know—just make sure you follow up with a member of the sponsor organizations to circle back with the answer.

The responses below are examples of things you can say, but obviously you need to speak to your specific circumstances. For instance, if you're not a MAP grant recipient, you could mention friends who are or talk more generally.

**Question:** How will we pay for this?

**Response:** It is completely fine to refocus attention on your experience and needs. You do not have to be a budget expert! Try: "I rely on smart elected officials like you to make tough decisions about the budget and how to pay for all the programs and policies we need. But I know one of the things you need to find funding for are adequate and equitable public university funding and funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP). Without a MAP grant, I can't afford to stay in school. And without more funding for my university, I know I'll never be able to have the kind of support I need and deserve."

**Question:** What do you want me to cut so we can fund what you want?

**Response:** Again, you can and should turn the focus back to your needs and not engage on which programs and services are worth cutting. Just like above, you could say, "I don't want any cuts to existing programs and services people rely on. I know how hard that can be because it's something I'm worried about with my MAP grant. Without it, I can't afford my tuition and fees, and I am going to have to *work more and go to school part time / take out more in loans and leverage my future earnings / drop out!*" And I know without additional funding through the Adequate and Equitable Funding Formula, my university won't be able to provide me with a scholarship to fill the gap."

**Comment:** I just don't think this is something we can fund this year.

**Response:** "That is really disappointing to hear because..."

- I need my MAP grant in order to stay in school. And even if I get a grant, it doesn't cover enough of my tuition and fees; OR
- So many of my friends at school rely on MAP to afford college. I don't know how to go back and tell them that you don't support them."

# Illinois State Legislators

Some Illinois state legislators have taken the time to meet with higher education advocates to hear the reasons why time, energy, and funding investments are important for the state. While we have a packed schedule, there may be opportunities to catch up with state legislators informally. Be on the lookout for these legislators as you move around the Illinois State Capitol Building.

## HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



La Shawn K. Ford (D)  
Chairperson



Debbie Meyers-Martin (D)  
Vice Chairperson



Dove Severin (R)  
Republican Spokesperson



Carol Ammons (D)  
Member



Amy Briel (D)  
Member



Sharon Chung (D)  
Member



Michael J. Coffey, Jr. (D)  
Member



Michael Crawford (D)  
Members



Kimberly Du Bouchet (D)  
Member



Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D)  
Member



Barbara Hernandez (D)  
Member



Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez (D)  
Member



Paul Jacobs (R)  
Member



Theresa Mah (D)  
Member



Chris Miller (R)  
Member



Brendan Schweitzer (R)  
Member



Katie Stuart (D)  
Member



Don Swanson (R)  
Member

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Katie Stuart (D)  
Chairperson



Sharon Chung (D)  
Vice Chairperson



Dan Swanson (R)  
Republican Spokesperson



Carol Ammons (D)  
Member



Diane Blair-Sherlock (D)  
Member



David Friess (R)  
Member



Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D)  
Member



Barbara Hernandez (D)  
Members



Norma Hernandez (D)  
Member



Tracy Katz Muhl (D)  
Member



Wayne A. Rosenthal (R)  
Member



Dan Ugaste (R)  
Member

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## HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE SENATE



Mary Edly-Allen (D)  
Chair



Michael W. Halpin (D)  
Vice Chair



Bill Cunningham (D)  
Member



Paul Faraci (D)  
Member



Graciela Guzman (D)  
Member



David Koehler (D)  
Member



Kimberly A. Lightford (D)  
Member



Mike Porfiro (D)  
Members



Steve Stadelman (D)  
Member



Dale Fowler (R)  
Minority Spokesperson



Terri Bryant (R)  
Member



Erica Harriss (R)  
Member



Jill Tracy (R)  
Member



Craig Wilson (R)  
Member

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## SENATORS WHO ATTENDED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES



Elgie B. Sims, Jr. (D)  
SBC  
17th District: Chicago



Terri Bryant (D)  
SBU  
58th District: Morrisbarns



Javier L. Cervantes (D)  
SBC  
3rd District: Chicago



Bill Cunningham (D)  
SBC  
18th District: Chicago



John F. Carron (D)  
SBC  
42nd District: Lemont



Donald P. DeWitte (D)  
SIS  
11th District: West Dundee



Mary Eddy-Alton (D)  
SBU  
31st District: Graystone



Paul Farnaci (D)  
SBC  
12nd District: Champaign



Sara Feigensolter (D)  
SBU  
6th District: Chicago



Laura Fine (D)  
SBU  
6th District: Glenview



Cellina Villanueva (D)  
SBC  
12th District: Chicago



Michael W. Tolpin (D)  
SBC  
36th District: Rock Island



Erica Harris (D)  
SBU  
36th District: Edwardsville



Michael E. Hastings (D)  
SBC  
9th District: Frankfort



Emil Jones, III (D)  
SBC  
14th District: Chicago



Kimberly A. Lightford (D)  
SBU  
4th District: Hillside



Steve McClure (D)  
SIS  
54th District: Litchfield



Jason Pommier (D)  
SBC  
57th District: Vandalia



Willie Preston (D)  
CSU  
16th District: Chicago



Chapin Rose (D)  
SBC  
50th District: Champaign



Jill Tracy (D)  
SR  
30th District: Quincy



Sally J. Turner (D)  
SBC  
44th District: Lincoln

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## REPRESENTATIVES WHO ATTENDED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES



Dagmara Avclar (D)  
NEIU  
5th District: Romeoville



Kam Buckner (D)  
UIUC  
28th District: Chicago



Terra Costa Howard (D)  
UIUC  
42nd District: Lombard



William "WSP" Davis (D)  
SIUC  
30th District: East Hazel Crest



Kimberly DuBaclet (D)  
UIUC  
5th District: Chicago



Marcus C. Evans, Jr. (D)  
CSU  
33rd District: Chicago



Bradley Friths (D)  
UIUC  
34th District: Dixon



Jehan Gordon-Booth (D)  
UIUC  
302nd District: Peoria



Norine K. Hammond (D)  
WU  
94th District: Macomb



William E. Hester (D)  
UIUC  
57th District: Morton



Elizabeth "Lisa"  
Hernandez (D)  
NEIU  
2nd District: Cicero



Norma Hernandez (D)  
UIC  
77th District: Melrose Park



Lindsey LaPointe (D)  
UIC  
19th District: Chicago



Joyce Mason (D)  
UIC  
51st District: Geneva



Tony M. McGonigle (D)  
WU  
10th District: Savanna



Debbie Meyers-Martin (D)  
UIC  
38th District: Matteson



Bob Morgan (D)  
UIC  
58th District: Highland



Adam M. Newberg (D)  
ISU  
102nd District: Tiptonville



Aaron M. Orlis (D)  
UIC  
1st District: Chicago



Steven Redick (D)  
UIC  
63rd District: Woodstock

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## REPRESENTATIVES WHO ATTENDED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (CONT.)



Robert "Bob" Riba (D)  
CSU  
11th District: Elmhurst



Nicholas K. Smith (D)  
CSU  
34th District: Chicago



Ryan Spain (R)  
URUC  
73rd District: Peoria



Dan Swanson (R)  
WU  
71st District: Woodhull



Dennis Tipward, Jr. (R)  
WU  
109th District: Pontiac



Jawaharal Williams (D)  
NEU  
10th District: Chicago



Patrick Windhorst (R)  
ETC  
117th District: Harrisburg



## Why is it important to meet with legislators at the State Capitol?

Visiting the State Capitol allows you to engage with lawmakers and make your voice heard directly to engage with lawmakers and make your voice heard directly. It's an effective way to influence legislative decisions that can impact your cause or issue area. By advocating in person, you can build relationships, share your expertise, and demonstrate the importance of your cause.

## How do you effectively prepare for your visit to the State Capitol?

To prepare for your visit, research the legislation you wish to support or oppose or learn more about the issue area you plan to discuss. Understand the key points, potential impacts, and research the legislation you wish to support or oppose or learn more about the issue area you plan to discuss. Understand the key points, potential impacts, and legislators involved.

## Advocacy Tips

1. **Be concise and focused** Prepare a brief introduction and present your key points clearly. Legislators have busy schedules, so make the most of your limited time.
2. **Be respectful and professional** Maintain a positive attitude, listen actively, and address any concerns or questions raised. Remember to thank them for their time and consideration.
3. **Follow up with a thank you note** After the meeting, send a personalized "Thank you" note expressing your appreciation and reiterating your main points.

## Know Your Audience

When advocating, you have two audiences: the audience you're advocating *for* and the audience you're advocating *to*

- Identifying the audience you're advocating for will guide your advocacy efforts and also who you reach out to regarding reach out to regarding individuals and groups that should join your cause.
- Identifying the audience you're advocating to (elected officials) helps with your strategy. We all know the best defense is a good offense. Since our goal is always to make sure we are scoring, we should take an offensive approach to our advocacy efforts. Make sure that your game plan includes all the parts necessary to get your message across.

Three things to think about when planning this is and also thinking about what you're going to say:

- **The What** How aware are you of your experience or the experience of the groups you're advocating for?
- **The How** What analysis can you make?
- **The How** How will you share your findings to impact change?

After you've thought through this and how you will present your message, your leave behind should be your next priority. What documents will you leave for them to take a closer look at and use when they're sharing your message with their colleagues? Less is more, so giving out more than three documents can be overwhelming as well as what you include on those documents. Make sure you are efficient in your message while also being concise; visuals are also impactful and quite frankly pretty awesome.

### **Short & Sweet Allows us to Succeed**

Springfield is very fast paced, so always plan for a quick and concise meeting even if you're given the opportunity to have a formal meeting with a legislator. You will have a limited amount of time with an elected official, so plan for a quick meeting even if your meeting ends up lasting longer. Many times, elected officials and their staff are on the move or planning to be. Their minds are working a million miles per hour so you need to keep up. This is when elevator speeches come in handy. Approach it like this: if you had 60 seconds with a decisionmaker what are the three most important pieces of information you'd like them to know. *Hint: start with your name and organization and then go from there.*

The biggest priority with this part is that you make room for your storytellers. It's actually why you're there, so make space for them to share why a bill/legislation matters to them and should matter to the legislator or why it shouldn't matter. If you are the storyteller, make sure you give yourself the space to share your "why" for being there.

The Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding has several main talking points we want to convey to legislators during this year's Advocacy Day. Below is a high-level view of what we're advocating for during our time in Springfield. Combine these points with your own story to make an impactful presentation. A full explanation of these talking points are on the Coalition's 2025 Legislative Agenda document

- Ensure Adequate and Equitable Funding for Illinois Colleges and Universities
- Invest \$73 Million in the Monetary Award Program (MAP) to Support Student Success
- Fully Fund Campus Mental Health at \$23.5 Million to Support Students Holistic Well-Being



# Tips for Speaking with Your Legislator

- ➔ Know about your legislator ahead of time, particularly how they think about your issue. Have they voted in favor of it, agreed to sponsor it, or spoken about it publicly?
- ➔ Be polite and courteous at all times.
- ➔ Try to make an appointment beforehand to ensure you have adequate time to speak.
- ➔ You may be nervous, but remember that you probably know more about the subject than the legislator does.
- ➔ Introduce yourself and any members of your group.
- ➔ Decide who will speak, who will ask questions, who will ask for the action, and who will take notes (if needed) beforehand.
- ➔ Include your personal story, but make sure it is related to the issue at hand and your “ask” of the legislator.
- ➔ Summarize the action (the “ask”) you would like the legislator to take.
- ➔ If the legislator asks you something and you don’t know the answer, say so. Offer to get the legislator the information at a later date.
- ➔ Leave a fact sheet with information on the issue with your legislator.
- ➔ Leave a number where the legislator can call you back.
- ➔ Write down important points and any follow-up information you agreed to provide to the legislator.
- ➔ Thank the legislator for his or her time.
- ➔ Write to say thanks and to follow up on information you agreed to provide.

# Revisiting the 2024 Higher Education Advocacy Day



On April 16, 2024, the Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding hosted its first in-person Higher Education Advocacy Day in Springfield, Ill.

With support from many statewide and national non-profits including Advance Illinois, Partnership for College Completion, Women Employed, and Young Invincibles, over 60 advocates, including dozens of students, met with state legislators at the State Capitol Building to fight for a better higher education system for all in Illinois.

Advocates championed several topics throughout the day, focusing on the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding's recommendations, increasing investment into the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act, funding the Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship and investing an additional \$50 million into the Monetary Award Program (MAP).

In addition to meeting with legislators throughout the day, the event included a rally in the rotunda where several legislators and leaders of partnered organizations spoke out in support of the Coalition's priorities, including Representative Carol Ammons, Representative Kam Buckner and Representative Katie Stuart.

"We stand united at our state capitol with core members of the Coalition and advocates across Illinois who champion policies directing more resources to colleges serving Black, Latinx, low-income, rural, and first-generation students," said Christian Perry, PCC Director of Policy and Advocacy at the rally. "It is our hope that by advocating for an equitable funding model, along with our other priorities, we can help better serve and direct needed resources to Black, Latinx, low-income, rural and first-generation college students and the institutions serving them."

# Revisiting the 2024 Higher Education Advocacy Day

From the students who raised their voices and shared their stories to the advocates who showed up and spoke out, the Coalition's Advocacy Day made clear that the work of making higher education more equitable for all students in Illinois is just getting started.







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