



# 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 Illinois lawmakers that adequate and equitable funding in Illinois' higher education system is crucial.

Join the Coalition as we advocate for:

- **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.
- **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.

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 Your Lawmakers** 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/HB 1581.

## Ongoing Actions

[Click to Edit and Send a Letter to Your Lawmakers](#)

*Suggested/ Drafted Letter*

Dear **[insert state legislator]**,

As a **[share a little about your identity as it relates to higher education e.g. concerned student, parent, educator, citizen of Illinois]**, I urge you to take bold action to address the deeply embedded equity issues in our higher education system. The Monetary Award Program (MAP) and SB 13/HB 1581 are two critical tools that ensure Illinois can better support our higher education institutions and students.

We know that 60% of Black and 50% of Latinx students disproportionately benefit from MAP funding, increasing college access and affordability. A \$73M MAP investment will ensure that all eligible students can receive the funding to pursue postsecondary education. We must not stop at MAP funding. Declining state appropriations and the lack of an institutional funding model have created an unstable landscape.

Since 2000, state appropriations to public universities have been cut by 46%, burdening students and families with rises in tuition and fees. For too long Illinois has accepted that one university has over \$12,000 to spend per student while another only has \$5,000 per student. This current system is inadequate and inequitable. SB 13/ HB 1581 rightsizes funding, empowering universities to help their students thrive. **[speak to some of the barriers you have experienced or witnessed regarding entering college and/or persisting once enrolled]**

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. MAP funding and SB 13/ HB 1581 have the power to transform the higher education landscape in equitable ways.

We listened to the state budget address on February 19 and while we appreciate the state's commitment to education, we must do more. We will continue to advocate to ensure Illinois leaders will invest in MAP and pass SB 13/ HB 1581. Thank you for working to ensure that our students and universities have the resources needed to 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 with lawmakers about the need for Illinois to prioritize students when it comes to higher education funding!

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

#### Suggested Social Media Posts

### MARCH 19



Click here to find your lawmakers' social media handles



.@staterep @statesen prioritize higher education equity and access because Illinois students have what it takes! Invest the resources needed to ensure college is accessible for each and every one of Illinois' students #MapMatters #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

### MARCH 25



We know a college degree paves the way to greater opportunity. @staterep @statesen, we need to you pass #SB13 to ensure Illinois students can take advantage of this game changing opportunity #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

### MARCH 26

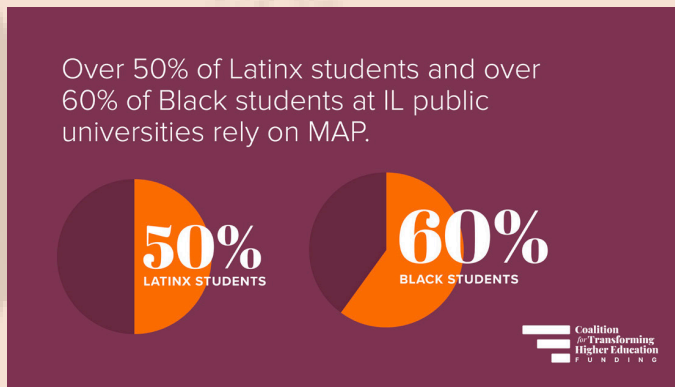


.@staterep @statesen Illinois stands to come out on top when it passes #SB13. Advocate for adequate and equitable funding for our public universities because our state and our students deserve it #SB13 #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

## Suggested Social Media Posts, Cont'd

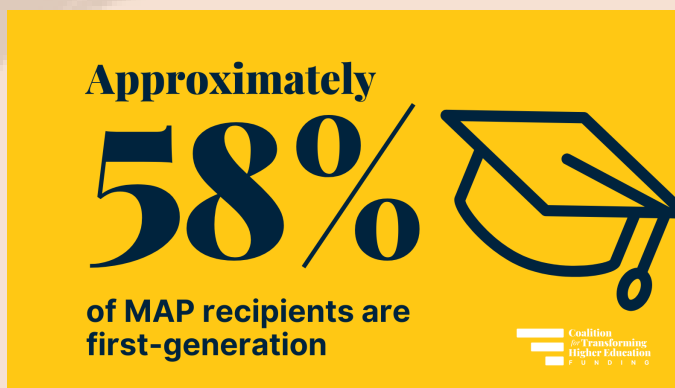
April 1



A \$73M increase in MAP will continue to make college accessible for all, but especially for the 50% of Latinx and 60% of Black students who are MAP-eligible. Support our students and invest in #MAP

[Click to Tweet](#)

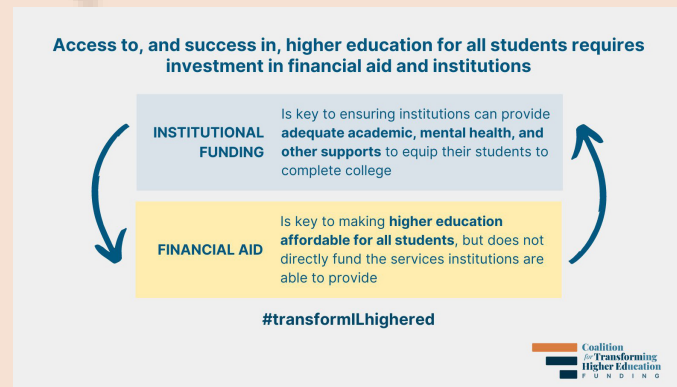
April 8



#MAPMatters because it is a critical resource for #firstgen students. Support students by investing in MAP, paving the way for every student to access a college degree with the support they need.

[Click to Tweet](#)

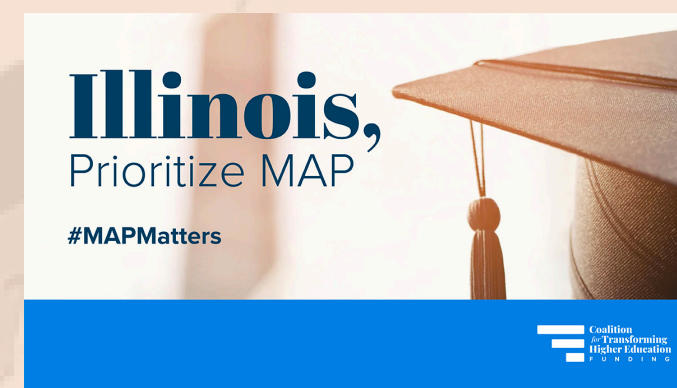
April 2



MAP funding and state appropriations expand college access and affordability and Illinois students need both to actualize their postsecondary goals. @staterep @statesen, we need to invest in both. #MAPMatters #TransformILHigherEd

[Click to Tweet](#)

April 9



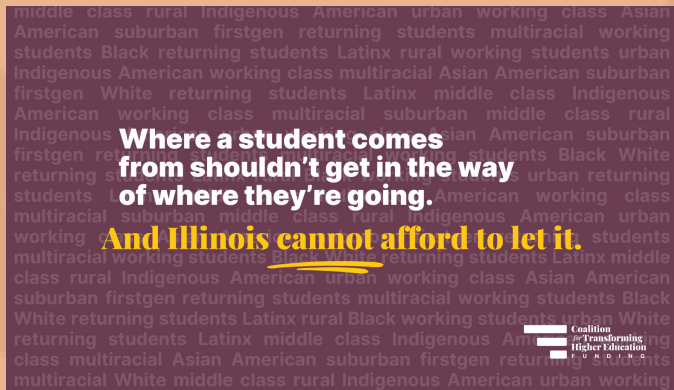
Now more than ever we must continue investment in MAP so that every MAP-eligible student can access higher education. @staterep @statesen advocate for a \$73M investment in MAP to meet the needs of eligible IL students.

[Click to Tweet](#)



Suggested Social Media Posts, Cont'd

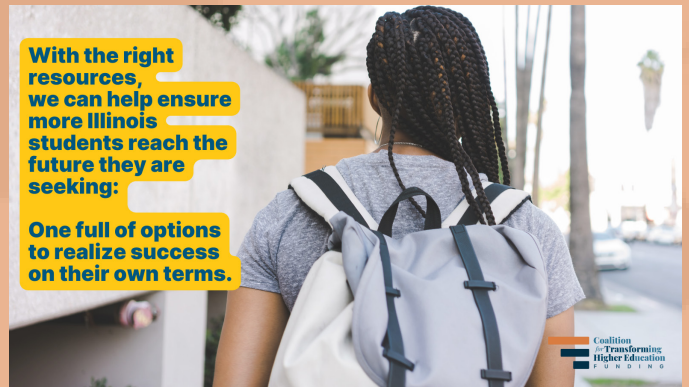
April 15



Illinois' diversity is its strength! SB 13/HB 1581 recognizes this, calling on our state to strengthen how it supports the schools enrolling large numbers of #real Illinois students.

[Click to Tweet](#)

April 16

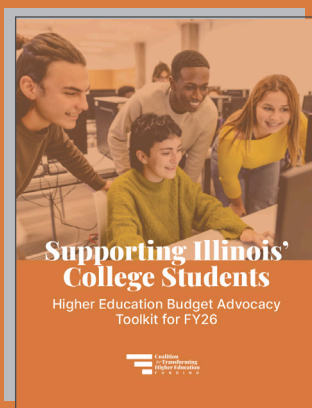


When Illinois ensures every college student can access resources and supports critical to their unique paths to graduating, it's expanding what's possible for those students, their families, and our communities. #TransformILHigherEd

[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!**  
Share this toolkit and messages with members of your community!



**QUESTIONS?**  
Paola Salgado  
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