

# Illinois Eastern Community Colleges



## 2025-2026 Student Financial Aid Handbook Terms and Conditions



Frontier Community College  
2 Frontier Drive  
Fairfield, IL 62837-2601  
Phone: 618.842.3711 or 877.464.3687  
Fax: 618.842.4425  
[fccfa@iecc.edu](mailto:fccfa@iecc.edu)  
Justn Young, Coordinator of Financial Aid



Lincoln Trail College  
11220 State Highway 1  
Robinson, IL 62454-5707  
Phone: 618.544.8657 or 866.582.4322  
Fax: 618.544.4705  
[ltcfa@iecc.edu](mailto:ltcfa@iecc.edu)  
Krystle Riggles, Director of Financial Aid



Olney Central College  
305 North West Street  
Olney, IL 62450-1099  
Phone: 618.395.7777 or 866.622.4322  
Fax: 618.395.1261  
[occfa@iecc.edu](mailto:occfa@iecc.edu)  
Taryn Bunting, Coordinator of Financial Aid



Wabash Valley College  
2200 College Drive  
Mt. Carmel, IL 62863-2699  
Phone: 618.262.8641 or 866.982.4322  
Fax: 618.262.8647  
[wvcfa@iecc.edu](mailto:wvcfa@iecc.edu)  
Trina Dunkel, Coordinator of Financial Aid

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
Financial Aid Philosophy .....	3
Financial Aid Mission Statement .....	3
THE APPLICATION PROCESS .....	3
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS .....	3
FINANCIAL AID PROCESSING .....	3
2025-2026 IECC COST OF ATTENDANCE .....	4
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.....	4
TERMS OF FINANCIAL AID.....	4
CONDITIONS OF FINANCIAL AID.....	6
FINANCIAL AID RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.....	6
Federal Pell Grant .....	7
Eligibility .....	7
Award Determination .....	7
Disbursements .....	7
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG).....	7
Eligibility .....	7
Award Determination .....	7
Disbursements .....	8
Federal Work-Study Program (FWS) .....	8
Eligibility .....	8
Award Determination/Selection Process .....	8
Payroll Disbursements .....	8
William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans .....	9
Eligibility .....	9
Award Determination .....	10
Disbursements .....	10
Monetary Award Program.....	10
Eligibility .....	10
Award Determination .....	11
Disbursements .....	11
VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT PROGRAMS .....	11
Post 9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33).....	11
Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty (Chapter 30).....	12
Montgomery GI Bill® Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) .....	12
Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 32).....	12
Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35).....	12
Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship.....	12

Eligibility .....	12
Benefits Usage and Processing.....	12
Illinois Veteran Grant .....	12
Eligibility .....	13
Benefit Usage and Processing .....	14
Illinois National Guard Grant .....	14
Eligibility .....	14
Benefit Usage and Processing .....	15
MIA/POW Scholarship.....	15
Eligibility .....	15
Benefit Usage and Processing .....	15
Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Service (Chapter 31) .....	15
Tuition Assistance .....	15
INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS .....	15
OTHER OUTSIDE AGENCY ASSISTANCE .....	15
PRIVATE LOANS.....	16

## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook was developed to help students better understand the financial aid process and provide information about the various programs offered at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC). This information is the most accurate at the time of publication. However, any federal, state, or local regulations shall always supersede the information outlined in this document. **PLEASE REVIEW THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY.**

### **Financial Aid Philosophy**

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges believes that the talents, hopes, and ambitions of our students are among the most valuable resources this nation possesses. With this thought in mind, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges continues to promote college financing opportunities for its qualified and deserving students who must find funds to attend college. The fundamental purpose of the financial aid program is to make it possible for students, who would normally be deprived of a college education because of inadequate funding, to attend college. While financing a college education is the primary responsibility of the student and his/her family, financial assistance is made possible through gift aid and optional aid.

### **Financial Aid Mission Statement**

The mission of the Office of Financial Aid is to remove financial barriers by providing access to higher education in a simple, fair, sensitive, and confidential manner, while informing and educating students and their families about the available financial resources to encourage persistence and completion.

## **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

Students should submit a [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) for the 2025-2026 aid year as soon as Federal Student Aid releases the FAFSA. For assistance completing the FAFSA, visit [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov).

The FAFSA is administered by the Department of Education and used to apply for financial assistance and analyze financial needs. Financial need is defined as the difference between the **Cost Of Attendance (COA)** and the Student Aid Index (SAI). The funds offered to a student for financing a college education should only be used for educational expenses (or the components included in the COA): tuition, fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation, and personal expenses. The SAI results from the information provided on the FAFSA and is the figure used to determine eligibility for need-based aid programs.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

In general, to be eligible for the federal and state aid administered by IECC, students must:

- Demonstrate financial need as determined by the financial aid office.
- Be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen with a valid social security number.
- Have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- Complete and submit FAFSA.
- Submit required documents to the financial aid office.
- Be admitted to an IECC college in an eligible program leading to an approved certificate or degree.
- Be enrolled at least half-time (six credit hours) for all programs (except Federal Pell Grant and Est IL State MAP Grant)
- Meet the **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** standards of IECC.
- Not have already received a bachelor's degree (applicable to Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG and MAP)
- Not be in default on any federal student loan.
- Not owe a repayment of a federal grant or ISAC gift aid to any postsecondary institution.

## **FINANCIAL AID PROCESSING**

Once your FAFSA is processed, you will receive a **FAFSA Submission Summary** from the Department of Education; the college(s) you selected will receive the results as an electronic Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). This will prompt each student to be mailed a letter from the Financial Aid Office requiring student follow-up. This letter will detail the instructions of where to find the requirements to complete in Entrata. Students can view more details about each required form here as well.

Each student must review the Terms and Conditions and the Electronic Consent information before being awarded aid. Some students will be selected for verification by the Department of Education and/or IECC and must submit additional documents to verify the accuracy of information on the FAFSA. Students interested in a Direct Student Loan must complete a Loan Request Form. Students interested in participating in the Federal

Work-Study program must complete a work-study application for their college. All documentation should be submitted as soon as possible to avoid processing delays.

After all documents are received and satisfied, the Financial Aid Specialist will package available assistance for the student, notifying him/her via a notice of financial aid. Students whose authorized financial aid exceeds the balance owed the institution AND that receive a notice of financial aid from an IECC school at least 10 days before the beginning of the semester.

In compliance with Federal Regulations, the Financial Aid Office must have received a processed ISIR from the Department of Education by the student's last day of enrollment in the current award year to determine if FSA funds can be disbursed. The student's financial aid will be delivered based on the disbursement schedule on the student's notice of financial aid.

## 2025-2026 IECC COST OF ATTENDANCE

The table below represents the 9-month Cost of Attendance for a student taking 15 credit hours each semester and is the ***estimated*** cost of living while attending college

Budget Components	In-District		Out-of-District		Out-of-State	
	Dependent	Independent & Dependent Living Away	Dependent	Independent & Dependent Living Away	Dependent	Independent & Dependent Living Away
<b>Tuition</b>	\$4,050.00	\$4,050.00	\$9,750.00	\$9,750.00	\$11,250.00	\$11,250.00
<b>Fees</b>	\$1,370.00	\$1,370.00	\$1,370.00	\$1,370.00	\$1,370.00	\$1,370.00
<b>Books &amp; Supplies, Course Materials &amp; Equipment</b>	\$1,460.00	\$1,460.00	\$1,460.00	\$1,460.00	\$1,460.00	\$1,460.00
<b>Food &amp; Housing</b>	\$2,568.00	\$7,338.00	\$2,568.00	\$7,338.00	\$2,568.00	\$7,338.00
<b>Commuting Expenses</b>	\$3,978.00	\$3,978.00	\$3,978.00	\$3,978.00	\$3,978.00	\$3,978.00
<b>Personal Expenses</b>	\$5,874.00	\$5,874.00	\$5,874.00	\$5,874.00	\$5,874.00	\$5,874.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,300.00</b>	<b>\$24,070.00</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$29,770.00</b>	<b>\$26,500.00</b>	<b>\$31,270.00</b>

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The FAFSA uses a standardized formula to determine Title IV financial aid eligibility. There are circumstances, especially during this period of economic hardship, where adjustments are warranted due to changes in a student's (or their family's) income, living situation, personal expenses, or unusual circumstances. Upon a student's request, the Financial Aid Specialist will perform a review of their current circumstances and supporting documentation to determine if they qualify. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

### **IECC has the following deadlines to request the review:**

- November 1 for students beginning enrollment in the fall semester
- April 1 for students beginning enrollment in the spring semester

## TERMS OF FINANCIAL AID

1. **Enrollment:** Financial Aid enrollment hours are equivalent to only the number of credit hours that are required by the student's degree and/or certificate. The Federal Pell Grant and Federal SEOG amounts reflect full-time enrollment of 12 credit hours. The State of IL MAP Grant (Est) amount reflects full-time enrollment of 15 credit hours. Federal and state grant aid will be reduced to reflect actual financial aid enrollment verified during disbursement.
2. **Disbursement of Awards:** Federal grants, state grants, and student loans are usually divided equally between the fall and spring semesters. The Federal Pell Grant is disbursed based on the Federal Enrollment Intensity Guidelines based on hours enrolled. As applicable, financial aid funds are used first to pay any outstanding tuition, fees, and bookstore charges. Title IV Authorization must be authorized on the student's account before non-intuitonal charges. If funds remain after allowable institutional charges are paid, a refund will be issued via direct deposit or mailed check within 14 days. Any balance owed on the student's account after applying for all grants and other credits is due and payable before mid-term unless prior arrangements have been made with the Business Office.

3. **Satisfactory Academic Progress:** Students are responsible for meeting satisfactory academic progress standards for financial aid as outlined by the Financial Aid Office. The most current policy can be obtained on the financial aid webpage <https://iecc.edu/satprog>. All appeals and supporting documentation must be submitted by the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the Fall/Spring term and the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the summer term. Failure to meet the deadline will result in ineligibility for Financial Aid during that term.
4. **Repeat Credit Hours:** Financial aid will cover the cost of tuition only for repeating a course if a non-passing grade (F or W) has been received for all previous attempts at the course. NOTE: Each time the course is taken, hours are considered attempted for purposes of calculating compliance with Satisfactory Academic Progress. Repeat fees attached to each course are NOT financial aid payable.
5. **Developmental Courses:** Financial aid enrollment will include a maximum of 30 hours of developmental coursework. Developmental courses have a PRE or REM prefix. NOTE: Developmental courses are considered hours attempted for purposes of calculating compliance with Satisfactory Academic Progress.
6. **Over awards:** For students receiving any federal and/or state financial aid, the total financial aid received from all sources (federal, state, institutional, agency, and private) cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance. If a student receives aid in excess of the cost of attendance, financial aid will be reduced in the following order: student loans, student employment, and then grants.
7. **Withdrawals:** Students who withdraw from all courses or stop attending courses prior to the 60% point in the semester may be required to repay a portion of financial aid funds received or may have financial aid funds canceled. The information below summarizes IECC's Return of Federal Funds policy. The full policy can be located on the IECC website, <https://iecc.edu/withdrawalpolicy>.

Regulations state that financial aid is earned by attending class. Students have not earned 100% of their financial aid until they have attended 60.001% of their scheduled enrollment period. Some financial aid has not been earned if a student withdraws before 60%. The unearned portion equals the percentage of the term remaining on the withdrawal date. Financial aid eligibility will be recalculated based on the actual period of attendance, and students may be asked to repay a portion of the disbursed aid.

The last date of attendance is determined in one of two ways. If a student officially withdraws from the institution, the last date of attendance is the date s/he begins the withdrawal process or notifies the institution of their withdrawal. An unofficial withdrawal occurs when a student stops attending classes but does not inform the institution of his/her withdrawal. The institution checks for non-attendance at the 25-day point and again at midterm. Each instructor will confirm whether the student is still attending class, or they will drop the student from the class. If a student has ceased to attend all classes at this point, the instructor will determine the last date of attendance. At the end of the term, the institution checks for failing grades. Each instructor will award a final grade for the course. Instructors who are awarded a grade of 'F' will be required to list the student's last date of attendance. The latest date reported for all 'F' grades will be used as the student's last date of attendance.

Once the institution has determined a student has either officially or unofficially withdrawn from the institution, the Financial Aid Office will perform the calculation to return funds. IECC returns funds within 45 days to the U.S. Department of Education. In recalculating a student's financial aid eligibility, they will reduce your financial aid in the following order:

1. Unsubsidized Direct Stafford loan
2. Subsidized Direct Stafford loan
3. Direct PLUS loan
4. Federal Pell Grant
5. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

Upon returning funds to the Department of Education, IECC will notify the student if they owe the institution for the return of aid. Students have 10 days to repay the balance or arrange a payment plan with the Business Office.

## **CONDITIONS OF FINANCIAL AID**

1. All federal/state awards are based on the receipt of sufficient funds from the awarding sources. Insufficient funding will result in awards being reduced or removed at the discretion of the Financial Aid Office.
2. The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to adjust financial aid amounts to ensure that all aid does not exceed the student's cost of attendance.
3. Students will be held responsible for any reduction in grant or loan eligibility from the original aid package as a result of inaccurate data.

## **FINANCIAL AID RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

By accepting financial aid, the student has the following rights and responsibilities.

### Students have the right to know:

- ◆ What financial assistance is available through federal, state, local, private, and institutional financial aid programs and the application deadlines for each program.
- ◆ The eligibility requirements and the criteria used for recipient selection for each program.
- ◆ How financial need is determined: including how cost of attendance budgets is developed, the calculation and amount of the SAI, and the criteria for determining the amount of aid awarded.
- ◆ How much of their financial need, as determined by IECC, has been met, including the resources considered in the calculation.
- ◆ The portion of the aid package that is grant or gift aid and what portion must be repaid: including interest rates, the total amount to be repaid, when repayment begins, and the number of months needed to repay the loan(s).
- ◆ How and when aid is disbursed or applied to their student account.
- ◆ That they may request a review of the aid package if they believe a mistake has been made or if financial circumstances have changed.
- ◆ The impact of financial aid disbursements if they withdraw before the semester is completed.
- ◆ How IECC determines that students are making satisfactory academic progress and what happens if they are not.
- ◆ That their privacy is protected under FERPA.

### It is the students' responsibility to:

- ◆ Apply for financial aid annually, as early as October 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the fall semester they will be attending. Falsification of information on application forms for federal student aid is considered a criminal offense and may be subject to penalties under the U.S. Criminal Code.
- ◆ Review and consider all information about IECC's academic programs before enrolling.
- ◆ Be aware of his/her ability to pay any institutional charges based on their personal resources and financial aid package.
- ◆ Read, understand, and keep copies of all correspondence, forms, and notifications they have received (or generated) regarding financial aid and other assistance while knowing they are legally responsible for all agreements signed.
- ◆ Review and understand the Terms and Conditions of your financial aid award.
- ◆ Complete Title IV Authorization through the students Entrata account.
- ◆ Notify the Financial Aid Office of a change in name, social security number, address, or enrollment status. If they have a loan, they should inform the lender as well.
- ◆ Inform the Financial Aid Office if they receive any other scholarships, grants, employer tuition benefits, public aid educational benefits, or other financial aid for educational purposes.
- ◆ Repay all student loans requested. When a student completes a promissory note, they agree to repay the loan. They must also complete any required entrance and exit loan counseling sessions if a Federal Direct Loan has been requested and received.
- ◆ Ask questions about anything they do not understand.
- ◆ Use financial aid for educational expenses only.

## **TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

To best serve the students enrolled at IECC, our offices strive to administer a variety of federal, state, and institutional financial assistance. The two most basic types of financial aid are gift aid and self-help aid. Gift aid

are funds received that do not have to be repaid. Self-help aid, or aid the individual must take responsibility for, includes work study and loans.

### **Federal Pell Grant**

The Federal Pell Grant Program (Pell) is an entitlement fund that does not need to be repaid. It provides need-based grants to students with exceptional financial need. Students may not receive Pell from more than one school at a time. For 2025-2026 the maximum Pell award is \$7,395 for the aid year.

#### ***Eligibility***

A student must meet all general eligibility criteria listed above. However, students cannot be considered for Pell if s/he:

- Is currently defaulted on a federal student loan;
- Owes money due to an overpayment of a federal student grant;
- Earned a bachelor's degree;
- Meets the maximum lifetime eligibility units for Pell

#### ***Award Determination***

Pell is considered to be the first source of aid to the student. Pell amounts awarded are always based on full-time enrollment, the payment schedules published by ED, the student's student aid index (SAI), and the cost of attendance as determined by IECC. However, the amount of Pell disbursed towards a student's tuition, fees, and other applicable institutional charges is determined by the student's enrollment status and the student's period of enrollment.

#### ***Disbursements***

Prior to disbursing Pell, the institution will confirm that the scheduled disbursement will not cause the student to exceed lifetime eligibility units. Disbursements are made each semester approximately six weeks after the start of the semester and before sixty percent of the semester. Dates are determined by the Financial Aid Office and published on the IECC website.

The Lifetime Eligibility Units (LEU) are earned based on the percentage of awards disbursed to the student each term. Each semester's full award is equivalent to approximately 50.000 units and is prorated with the student's level of enrollment. Students may not receive more than 600.000 LEU which is equivalent to 12 full time semesters.

### **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)**

The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) provides need-based grants to low-income, undergraduate students to assist with financing a higher education. FSEOG is a campus-based program, which means a limited allocation of funds is received from ED to support the program.

#### ***Eligibility***

A student must meet all general eligibility criteria listed above. However, students cannot be considered for FSEOG if the student:

- Is currently defaulted on a federal student loan;
- Owes money due to an overpayment of a federal student grant;
- Earned a bachelor's degree.
- Has met the maximum lifetime eligibility units for Pell;
- Has no unmet need following Pell and all other resources

#### ***Award Determination***

Priority for FSEOG is given to students that are receiving a Pell grant, have unmet need, and the lowest SAI (\$-1500-\$0). Should funds remain after priority students have been considered, then awards will be made to Pell-eligible students with the next lowest SAI in order of lowest to highest. Any funds remaining after all Pell-eligible students have been awarded will be applied in the same manner as Pell-eligible students. FSEOG will be awarded until the program's funds are depleted.

The annual maximum award for a student is \$1,000, or \$500 per semester. The minimum disbursement is \$250, except for the purpose of spending remaining funds. Students with the lowest SAI are awarded on a



first-come, first-serve basis with the goal of awarding 80% of funds awarded prior to the Fall disbursement and the remaining 20% to be awarded by the Spring disbursement.

### ***Disbursements***

Disbursements are made each payment period approximately six weeks after the start of the term and before sixty percent of the semester on the same date as the first Pell disbursements. Disbursement dates are determined by the Financial Aid Office and published on the IECC website. Awards are then prorated based on a student's enrollment level at the time of disbursement. The day prior to the first published FSEOG disbursement date, enrollment is locked in all eligible students and a final review is done to ensure students are Pell eligible and that they are being disbursed aid based on the appropriate enrollment status. Students that are locked at an enrollment that is less-than-half-time will not receive a disbursement of FSEOG.

### **Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)**

The Federal Work Study Program (FWS), much like FSEOG, provides a limited amount of campus-based funds for the institution to operate a part-time employment program to help students with need earn money to pay for educational expenses. Students are generally employed in approved positions on campus, but they may also be employed by a federal, state or local public agency with an approved agreement.

### ***Eligibility***

A student must meet all general eligibility criteria listed above. However, students cannot be considered for FWS if the student:

- Is currently defaulted on a federal student loan.
- Owes money due to an overpayment of a federal student grant.
- Has no remaining unmet need after Pell and all other resources.

Before earning compensation from FWS funds, a student must complete:

- Must complete all required HR paperwork
- Complete FWS Supervisor Agreement
- Online Vector training for FERPA and Sexual Harassment
- KnowBe4 training
- A review of the FWS handbook with a supervisor and the Financial Aid Office.

### ***Award Determination/Selection Process***

Work-study students are awarded a specified number of work-study hours which are to last the entire academic year. All eligible students will be considered for an FWS award once the Federal Work Study application is received in the Financial Aid Office. FWS Application is located on each student's Entrata account.

Upon receipt of a student's application, the institution will evaluate the student's unmet need, class schedule, available positions, and any other factors that might affect the hours a student could work each week to determine the appropriate award amount. At most, a student will be awarded up to 20 hours per week during enrollment periods and 28 hours per week in eligible periods of non-enrollment. The Financial Aid Office will work with the supervisors of the available position(s) to place a student for employment. The supervisor is responsible for making the final hiring decision.

It is the Financial Aid Office's responsibility to maintain the work-study budget. If funds get close to meeting the fiscal year budget, the Financial Aid Office can request that work-study employees work less hours to stay within the budget. Work-study employees and supervisors will be notified ahead of time before any changes are made.

### ***Payroll Disbursements***

Student employees cannot be paid salary or commission. They are paid no more than the current hourly minimum wage as determined by the State of Illinois. FWS disbursements are made on a bi-weekly basis to students as work is performed in the form of a paper check or optional direct deposit. Students must submit a timesheet on the last Friday of the payroll period, or earlier if requested. The hours documented on the timesheet for the pay period are approved by the student's direct supervisor and reviewed by the Financial Aid Office at each college before being processed by the payroll department. Incomplete, late, or inaccurate

timesheets will not be processed until the following payroll. Hours worked on the timesheet(s) are multiplied by the current minimum wage to determine the gross pay for the student. The net pay is then deducted from the award amount each pay period to determine the remaining award amount. Students cannot be paid more than the amount of their award.

Disbursements must be made in the appropriate aid year. Disbursements for the 2025-2026 will begin on July 1, 2025. A student must be awarded FWS for Fall 2025 to remain eligible to work after June 30, 2026. Graduating students, or students completing their program, must end their employment through FWS on May 12, 2026.

### **William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans**

The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (Direct Loans) provides low-interest loans to assist students with financing a higher education. Loans are borrowed funds from the U.S. Department of Education that must be repaid with interest regardless of the completion of a student's educational goal or a student securing a career in the field of study following graduation. IECC is able to provide three different types of loans.

**Direct Subsidized Loans** are available to undergraduate students with financial need. The amount a student can borrow is determined by the school and cannot exceed his/her unmet need. There is a maximum eligibility period for subsidized loans. The Department of Education covers the interest while students are enrolled at least half-time, for the six months after they leave school or drop below half-time enrollment, and during a period of deferment. Repayment begins approximately six months after the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time enrollment.

The interest rate for loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2024, and before July 1, 2025, is 6.53% and is fixed for the life of the loan. There is also an origination fee, 1.057%, which is paid to the Department of Education upon disbursement.

**Direct Unsubsidized Loans** are available to undergraduate students that may not have financial need as determined by the expected family contribution and cost of attendance. The amount a student can borrow is determined by the school based on the cost of attendance and any other financial aid and resources. The student is responsible for paying the interest during all periods. If the student chooses not to pay the interest while in school and during any non-payment periods (grace, deferment, or forbearance), the interest of the loan is capitalized, or added to the principal balance of the loan. Repayment begins approximately six months after the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time enrollment.

The interest rate for loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2024, and before July 1, 2025, is 6.53% and is fixed for the life of the loan. There is also an origination fee, 1.057%, which is paid to the Department of Education upon disbursement.

**Direct PLUS Loans** are available to eligible parents of undergraduate students, as well as graduate and professional students. Parents must apply for the loan at [studentloans.gov](http://studentloans.gov) and should not have an adverse credit history. The amount a parent can borrow is the cost of attendance determined by IECC less any other financial aid and resources received by the student. Repayment begins right away. However, parents may have the option to defer payment until approximately six months after the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time enrollment.

The interest rate for loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2024 and before July 1, 2025 is 9.08% and is fixed for the life of the loan. There is also an origination fee, 4.228% paid to the Department of Education upon disbursement.

#### ***Eligibility***

To determine if a student is eligible for Direct Loans, the student must complete a Loan Request form by the deadline for the term. **Parents must also complete a Loan Request form for PLUS loans through Federal Student Aid and IECC Financial Aid.**

- Deadline for the Fall semester is November 1.
- Deadline for the Spring semester is April 1.
- Deadline for the Summer semester is July 1.

A student must meet all general eligibility criteria listed above. However, students cannot be considered for Direct Loans if the student:

- Is currently defaulted on a federal student loan;
- Owes money due to an overpayment of a federal student grant;
- Meets the annual and/or aggregate loan limits;

To be disbursed loan funds, first-time borrowers must go to [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov) and:

- [Complete Entrance Counseling](#) to ensure s/he understands their obligation to repay the loan;
- [Complete the Master Promissory Note](#) (MPN), agreeing to the terms of the loan. If the student has an MPN already signed but it is expired the student must complete a new MPN.

Parents must go to [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov) to complete the PLUS loan application for a review of their credit history.

### ***Award Determination***

Direct Loan amounts awarded are determined by the institution regardless of the way a student may split the amounts on the Loan Request form. IECC will use the student's request as a guide to ensure the student receives the best and most appropriate award package. Students who request one semester loan payments will receive a prorated amount based on enrollment.

The amount of loans awarded to a student will not exceed the annual or aggregate loan limits. The total annual combined student Direct Loan award for a dependent Freshman is \$5,500 and for a dependent Sophomore is \$6,500. The total annual combined Direct Loan award for independent students (and dependent students for those whose parents cannot get a PLUS loan) is \$9,500 at the Freshman level and \$10,500 at the Sophomore level.

Aggregate loan limits for dependent students are up to \$23,000 subsidized, but not more than a combined total of \$31,000. Aggregate loan limits for independent students (and dependent students for those whose parents cannot get a PLUS loan) are \$23,000 subsidized, but not more than a combined total of \$57,500.

### ***Disbursements***

At the time of disbursement, the institution confirms the student is still enrolled at least half-time, has met the entrance counseling requirement, and has a valid, linked MPN. Loans are disbursed in two disbursements, generally one disbursement in the Fall semester and the second disbursement in the Spring semester. The first disbursement date for the Fall and Spring semesters is at least 30 days following the first day of classes. Single-term loans will be disbursed in two payments. The second disbursement cannot be made until the student has reached the calendar midpoint. Students who request a loan or complete loan requirements following the first disbursement date will be checked for eligibility, and funds will be disbursed at that time. The amount applied to the student's account is reduced by the amount of the origination fee. The net amount is applied to a student's outstanding tuition, fees, and other applicable institutional charges.

## **Monetary Award Program- Policy and Procedure for Awarding**

The Monetary Award Program (MAP) provides grants, which do not need to be repaid, to those Illinois residents who attend approved Illinois colleges and demonstrate financial need. The funds from this program are only applied toward tuition and mandatory fees, not to exceed the maximum award amount for the academic year. . MAP grants are limited based on the number of applicants and funding levels appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly. Please be aware that considering state funding constraints, reductions to estimated or actual MAP grants are possible.

### ***Eligibility***

To determine if a student is eligible for MAP, the student must sign and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) prior to the announced suspense date each academic year and agree to share the information with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). ISAC relies on specific data elements/questions on the FAFSA to determine eligibility.

NOTE: Illinois residents who may not otherwise be eligible for federal student aid and do not file the FAFSA may be eligible for the MAP grant using the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid. Contact the Financial Aid Office at your college for more information. Financial Aid applies the MAP Grant award during its normal award packaging routine.

Other requirements for eligibility are that a student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;

- Be a legal resident of Illinois;
- Demonstrate financial need;
- Be enrolled in a minimum of three credit hours in a degree or certificate program at an approved Illinois college, for either a semester or quarter term throughout the institution's tuition refund/withdrawal adjustment period;
- Maintain the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards of the institution, which is certified at the time MAP payment is requested;

Students cannot be considered for MAP if she/he:

- Has received a baccalaureate degree or is a graduate student.
- Is in default on any student loan or owes refunds or repayment of any state or federal grant or scholarship.
- Is incarcerated.
- Is otherwise not eligible to receive federal financial assistance as an undergraduate student.
  - MAP Paid Credit Hours that can be received are capped at 135.

### ***Award Determination***

The institution receives award announcements via the GAP Access System on all Student Aid Report (SAR) transactions. The maximum annual amount for a student is based on relative financial eligibility at an ISAC-approved institution and a full-time enrollment of fifteen (15) credit hours. Eligibility criteria, award determination, and quality control checks (inconsistent/ missing/ conflicting data) are built into Banner "quality control" awarding rules. Inconsistencies in data resulting from the receipt of information from other sources is reviewed manually by the office director/designate. FAFSA data is updated/corrected as deemed necessary and resubmitted to CPS via EdConnect.

### ***ILLINOIS Residency Verification***

Illinois Residency Verification is confirmed by the student's permanent address in Banner and compared to data reported on the FAFSA. The Financial Aid Office will verify the student's state of residency weekly compared to the MAP eligibility report. For dependents, Illinois Residency is confirmed by the self-reported parent state of legal residency and date of Illinois residence on the FAFSA. For independent students, Illinois Residency is confirmed by the self-reported student state of legal residency and date of Illinois residence on the FAFSA. If the validity of the student's claim is questionable, additional documentation may be required. For independent students, the documentation must indicate the student resided in Illinois for 12 continuous months before the beginning of the academic year. A list of acceptable documentation (such as Illinois Driver's License, wage statements, or rent receipts) is available from the Office of Financial Aid. Conflicting information may include parent and student address mismatch, reported Illinois residency of less than one year or student attended high school outside of Illinois.

### ***Disbursements***

MAP funds are paid directly to the institution which has certified the recipient's eligibility. When funds are received by the institution from the State of Illinois, the Business Office will apply the appropriate MAP payments to the student's account. Payments are identified as **State of Illinois MAP Grant (Est)**.

## **VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT PROGRAMS**

Based on the approval from the State Approving Agency for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), most IECC programs are approved for veteran benefits administered by the VA. Each IECC campus has a VA Certifying Official to administer the reporting requirements as defined in the School Certifying Official Handbook for the following programs.

### **Post 9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33)**

The Post-9/11 GI Bill® offers up to 36 months of education benefits for higher education and training benefits to Veterans, Service members, and their families who served a minimum of 90 days after September 10, 2001. Benefits include tuition and fees paid to the institution and a monthly housing allowance and book stipend paid to the student. The benefit eligibility percentage is based on length of service.

### **Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty (Chapter 30)**

The Montgomery GI Bill® assists active duty and Reservists with the pursuit of higher education degrees, certificates, and other education and training. The Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty provides up to 36 months of education benefits to Veterans and Service members who have at least two years of active duty, were honorably discharged, and have a high school diploma, GED, or 12 hours of college credit. Other requirements apply based on when the Service member entered active duty. Benefits are paid to the student as a monthly basic housing allowance.

"GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>."

### **Montgomery GI Bill® Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606)**

The Montgomery GI Bill® assists Reservists with the pursuit of higher education degrees, certificates, and other education and training. The Montgomery GI Bill® Selected Reserve provides up to 36 months of education and training benefits to members of the Selected Reserve who have a six-year obligation or, for officers, have agreed to serve six years in addition to the initial obligation. The Service member must also have completed the initial active duty for training, have a high school diploma or equivalent before completing IADT, and remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit. Benefits are paid to the student as a monthly basic housing allowance.

### **Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 32)**

Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) is available if an individual entered the service for the first time between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985, and enrolled in the program by contributing money from his or her military pay prior to April 1, 1987. There is no active application for this program, but benefits can be certified if a Veteran has previously been notified of eligibility.

### **Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35)**

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA) offers up to 45 months of education and training opportunities to eligible children and spouses of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or Veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. Benefits are paid monthly to the student.

### **Marine Gunary Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship**

The Fry Scholarship is available for children and spouses of Service members who are missing in action or were captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, were detained by force while in the line of duty by a foreign government or power, are in the hospital (or receiving outpatient treatment) for a service-connected permanent and total disability, or died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. Benefits offered by this program are equivalent to the Post 9/11 GI Bill® benefits.

#### ***Eligibility***

To be eligible for Veterans' education benefits listed above, the Veteran, Service member, or eligible family member must apply with VA Form 22-1990 or VA Form 22-5490 in person or by mail with a VA regional benefit office or online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). Eligibility is determined by the VA. Upon the eligibility determination, the individual will receive a certificate of eligibility which must be kept on file in the Financial Aid Office.

#### ***Benefits Usage and Processing***

Eligible Veterans and/or their dependents can use these educational benefits to work towards a degree, train for a specific career, trade, or industry, work in co-op training or work study, and/or take classes from home. Students should submit a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility and DD-214 Member 4 for the Veteran to the Financial Aid Office to confirm eligibility for benefits. Benefits may be certified for one semester through IECC without these documents. If a student is transferring to IECC and has used benefits elsewhere, the Financial Aid Office will collect VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495 to request a change in program or place of training.

### **Illinois Veteran Grant-Policy and Procedure for Awarding**

The Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG) is an entitlement program that waives tuition and mandatory fees for eligible applicants at Illinois public colleges or community colleges regardless of the state funding level. Qualified applicants may use this grant at the undergraduate or graduate level for the equivalent of four full-time academic years measured by eligibility units.

## **Eligibility**

To be considered eligible for IVG, a student must apply for this program online at [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org) and:

- Meet one of the two following criteria:
  - A) Have served at least one year of federal active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, which may include the Illinois National Guard and the Reserve component of the Armed Forces;
- Regardless of the length of service, have served in a foreign country in a time of hostilities in that country; was medically discharged for service-related reasons; or was discharged prior to August 11, 1967.
- Have received an honorable discharge (general discharge under honorable conditions is not eligible) for the most recent period of federal active duty service, and/or be honorably serving.\*Contact information is available for Illinois military personnel who need to request a Department of Defense (DOD) Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214 Member-4 or equivalent copy).
- Not a current member of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Applicants are not eligible if their only service has been attendance at a service academy. Time served attending military schools or for Initial Active Duty for Training, in the Delayed Entry Program, National Guard, Reserve or any other time that was not federal active duty is not considered equal to federal active duty service. Drill time (weekend and summer drills) by Guard members and Reservists is not equivalent to federal active duty service.
- Satisfy Illinois residency requirements by meeting the below qualifications as outlined *either* in a, b and c, *or* in d:
  - A) currently reside in Illinois unless you are serving federal active-duty service at the time of enrollment in college or residing with a spouse in continued military service who is currently stationed outside of Illinois.
  - B) were a resident of Illinois at the time of entering federal active-duty service or within six months prior to entering the service or were a student at an Illinois public 2- or 4-year college at the time of entering federal active-duty service.
  - C) established, or if on federal active duty service, plan to establish Illinois residency within six months after leaving federal active duty service or if married to a person in continued military service, a) apply for this grant within six months after and including the date the spouse was stationed within Illinois or b) if the spouse was stationed outside Illinois, established, or plan to establish, Illinois residency within six months after and including the date the spouse was separated.  
*(Note: You may be considered eligible for the IVG program by fulfilling “a” and “b” above; however, if you do not currently reside in Illinois (“a”), you will not receive IVG benefits.)*
  - D) reside in Illinois at the time of application and at the time of receiving benefits for enrollment and, at some point after leaving federal active duty service, have been a resident of Illinois for at least 15 consecutive years.
- Be enrolled at an Illinois 2- or 4-year college and maintain the minimum grade point average (GPA) required by the college.
- Not be in default on any student loan, nor owe a refund on any state or federal grant.

\* If you receive benefits from the IVG Program while serving federal active-duty service, upon discharge you will be required to verify that your most recent service has been characterized as honorable.

Applications should not be submitted later than the last day of the term the student is enrolled to be considered for benefits in that term. Qualified applicants will receive an IVG Notice of Eligibility Letter and Addendum that should be taken to the Financial Aid Office where a copy of this letter will be retained in the student's Veteran

file. A notice of eligibility from ISAC must be used by the institution to establish a qualified applicant's initial eligibility. There is approximately a four- to six-week turnaround from the date ISAC receives an application to when the qualified applicant receives a response. This same four- to six-week timeframe also applies for any additional documentation submitted in order to make a previously submitted application complete. Fully completed applications (including all required documentation) must be received at ISAC allowing sufficient time to complete processing prior to the last scheduled day of classes in the term for which a grant is requested. If you must obtain required documentation, please check the turnaround time with that source - for example, the website for the National Personnel Records Center indicates 10 working days as their turnaround time.

### ***Benefit Usage and Processing***

Upon receipt of the Notice of Eligibility letter, the Financial Aid Office will notify the Business Office of the student's eligibility for IVG benefits. The Business Office will submit a payment request to ISAC to report the total number of hours for which payment is being requested and will then apply payment to the Veteran's account.

## **Illinois National Guard Grant-Policy and Procedure for Awarding**

The Illinois National Guard (ING) grant is an entitlement program that waives tuition and eligible fees for qualified applicants at Illinois public colleges or community colleges regardless of the state funding level. Qualified applicants may use this grant at the undergraduate or graduate level for the equivalent of four or six full-time academic years measured by eligibility units.

### ***Eligibility***

To be eligible for the ING grant, students must apply for the program annually at [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org) and:

- Be an Illinois National Guard member, defined as meeting one of the two following criteria:
  - Be active in the Illinois National Guard;
  - Have been active in the Illinois National Guard for at least five consecutive years and have been called to federal active duty for at least six months and be within 12 months after the discharge date from the Illinois National Guard.
- Have completed one full year of service in the Illinois National Guard.
- Be an enlisted member or an officer (Public Act 94-583).
- Be enrolled at an Illinois public 2- or 4- year college and maintain an acceptable grade point average (GPA) determined by the institution.
- Not owe a refund on any state or federal grant.
- Not be in default on any educational loan or, if in default, have reinstated eligibility in accordance with ISAC Rules.
- File a complete application each academic year, indicating the college to be attended.

\*\* Those individuals who have been active in the Illinois National Guard for at least five consecutive years, had their studies interrupted by being called to federal active duty for at least six months, and meet eligibility requirements in addition to those listed above may be eligible to receive an additional year of Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant Program eligibility. Eligibility under these criteria is determined by the Education/Incentives Branch of the Department of Military Affairs Illinois (DMAIL) in Springfield, Illinois. Questions regarding individual eligibility status under this legislation should be directed to the applicant's chain of command, or to the Education/Incentives Branch of DMAIL at 217.761.3782.

### **Campus Requirements/Steps**

1. Complete ING application. (see Application Process)
2. After application completion, allow six to eight weeks for delivery of the eligibility letter.

3. If you do not have your eligibility letter by the first payment due date, please provide your confirmation of application to the Office of Military and Veteran Resources.
4. **Complete the process each academic year. ISAC will not approve late applications, and you will be required to pay an outstanding balance.**

Applications must be submitted by October 1 of the aid year for full-year benefit consideration, March 1 for second and/or third semester/quarter consideration, and June 15 for only summer term consideration.

#### ***Benefit Usage and Processing***

Upon receipt of the Notice of Eligibility letter, the Financial Aid Office will notify the Business Office of the student's eligibility for ING grant benefits. The Business Office will submit a payment request to ISAC to report the total number of hours for which payment is being requested following the tuition refund/withdrawal period and before the priority claim date for the term.

### **MIA/POW Scholarship**

This scholarship is administered by the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and provides tuition and certain fees for dependents of persons who were Illinois residents at the time they entered active duty and have been declared to be prisoners of war, missing in action, died as the result of a service connected disability, or disabled with 100% disability as a result of a service connected cause as recognized by the U.S Department of Veterans' Affairs or U.S. Department of Defense.

#### ***Eligibility***

Any spouse, natural child, legally adopted child, or step-child of an eligible veteran or serviceperson who possesses all necessary entrance requirements shall, upon application and proper proof, be awarded the MIA/POW Scholarship. The child must begin using the scholarship prior to his or her twenty-sixth birthday. Applications can be found at [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org). Qualified applicants will receive an I.D. card for the scholarship.

#### ***Benefit Usage and Processing***

Students receiving the MIA/POW Scholarship should submit a copy of the I.D. card and/or letter of eligibility to the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office will notify the Business Office of a student's eligibility.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Service (Chapter 31)**

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) is designed to assist Veterans with service-connected disabilities to obtain suitable employment and/or achieve independent living goals. Veterans that have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable, have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the VA, and apply for VR&E VetSuccess services may be eligible for certain education benefits to meet their goals.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Based on the Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding (DODMOU) for each campus, IECC is approved to accept funds via each Service's Tuition Assistance (TA) programs in exchange for education services. Eligibility of TA recipients is governed by federal law, DoD Instruction 1322.25, DoD Directive 1322.08E, and the cognizant Military Service's policies, regulations, and fiscal constraints. The FA Specialist will work in conjunction with the Service's Education Services Officer to provide assistance to the Service members.

### **INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS**

Each IECC campus is supported by a Foundation that provides scholarships and waivers to students meeting certain criteria. The scholarship files are maintained by the Foundation secretary and may require assistance from the Financial Aid Office to determine the financial need for awarding funds appropriately.

### **OTHER OUTSIDE AGENCY ASSISTANCE**

Financial assistance may be available to students through various outside agencies like the Department of Human Services (DHS)/Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program (WIOA), and Single Parent program. The funds provided by these programs will be considered in the Estimated Financial Assistance during packaging and awarding.



## **PRIVATE LOANS**

If a student is struggling to meet the cost of attendance with all other means of financial assistance, students may apply for a private student loan with a lender of their choice. It is the responsibility of the student to compare lenders, interest rates, and terms and conditions of the loan.

Our mission is to deliver exceptional education and services to improve the lives of our students and to strengthen our communities. Illinois Eastern Community Colleges reserves the right to change, without notice, any of the material, information, requirements, or regulations published in this publication. Illinois Eastern Community College District No. 529 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, parental status, religious affiliation, veteran status, national origin, ancestry, order of protection status, conviction record, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or any other protected category. Illinois Eastern Community Colleges adheres to the Federal Regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers appropriate services or activities with reasonable accommodations to any qualified disabled individual upon request. Illinois Eastern Community Colleges' Board of Trustees has adopted the Substance Abuse Policy. Students and Employees involved in substance abuse, within the college environment, are subject to disciplinary action.