



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**OCTOBER IS COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING MONTH® IN ILLINOIS**  
**ISAC and Partners Offer More Than 1,000 Free College Application and FAFSA® Completion Workshops in Over 200 Locations**

CHICAGO – If you are a senior in high school, a parent of a student, or an adult looking to head back to school, there’s a free workshop in your area this October to help make college possible for you or your student in 2019-20. Now in its third year, Governor Rauner has [proclaimed](#) October *College Changes Everything® Month* (CCE Month), when the state’s college access and financial aid agency, the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC) and partners will be assisting students with college applications and putting them in the best position possible to receive the funding they need to attend. In recognition of the Illinois Bicentennial, more than 200 official CCE Month sites across the state will hold both college application and financial aid events.

“As we look to the future of this great state during the Illinois Bicentennial, we know that ensuring a skilled workforce will be critical to our economic stability and growth,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of ISAC. “Every Illinois resident deserves the opportunity to choose to earn a postsecondary credential or degree that can improve their earning potential and help them advance their long-term career goals. CCE Month helps even the playing field by providing free assistance to students and families so they can make informed choices about their education and access all the financial aid for which they might be eligible.”

October is a busy month for high school seniors and others planning to attend college the following fall. The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#), the form that determines eligibility for federal and some state and institutional financial aid, becomes available on October 1<sup>st</sup> for the 2019-20 school year. Because some state aid, such as the Monetary Award Program (MAP grant) is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, students need to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible in order to have the chance to access as much financial aid as possible. At the same time, students are also completing their college applications.

During CCE Month, students and families can attend free workshops at their high school or public locations in their community to fill out college applications and/or complete their FAFSAs right then and there, with direct assistance from college and financial aid experts.

To search by ZIP Code for a free public event near you, visit [studentportal/isac.org/events](http://studentportal/isac.org/events). Students and parents should also check directly with their high schools for events within their own school.

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Many statewide workshops are hosted or supported by the ISACorps, recent college graduates who are trained to serve as near peer mentors to high school students. The ISACorps also provide free one-on-one assistance to students and families. To find your local ISACorps member, visit [studentportal/isac.org/isacorps](http://studentportal/isac.org/isacorps).

ISAC will also be providing answers to financial aid questions during Facebook Live events in October. Visit ISAC on Facebook [@ILStudentAssistance](https://www.facebook.com/ILStudentAssistance) for dates and times. Personalized assistance is also available through [ISAC College Q&A](http://isac.org/qa) (isac.org/qa) a text messaging service where students can get answers to their college and financial aid questions sent directly to their phones. The award-winning [ISAC Student Portal](http://isac.org/studentportal) (isac.org/studentportal) offers free online tools and resources for students. ISAC also offers assistance through the agency's call center, 1-800-899-4722 (ISAC).

ISAC supports high schools and counselors who would like to participate in CCE Month with a downloadable toolkit, materials and event support. Find out more at [collegechangeseverything.org/ccemonth](http://collegechangeseverything.org/ccemonth).

#### About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at [isac.org](http://isac.org) and follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ILStudentAssistance) (@ILStudentAssistance), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ISACfinaid) and on Instagram @ISACfinaid.

#### About College Changes Everything

College Changes Everything® (CCE) is a college access movement that recognizes that college can be a life changing experience not only for students, but also for families and communities. In Illinois and across the nation, those who obtain education beyond high school not only see a significant impact on their potential career prospects and future salary, but also change levels of poverty, life expectancy, crime and obesity rates in their communities. CCE is an essential part of helping Illinois reach its goal of increasing the proportion of adults in the state with high quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025. Find out more and join the conversation at [collegechangeseverything.org](http://collegechangeseverything.org).

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