



State of Illinois Financial Aid Graduation Requirement FAQ

In addition to all other graduation requirements, a student must meet one of the following requirements to receive a public school diploma (*Public Act 101-0180*):

1. File a FAFSA Application; or
2. File an Application for State Financial Aid; or
3. File a waiver/opt out with the school district.

The following FAQ Section will provide detailed information, to allow you and your family to make the best decision in completing this graduation requirement.

What is the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)? Why would I want to complete it?

The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) is the online application that allows a student to apply simultaneously for federal student aid (including the Pell Grant, work-study opportunities, and federal student loans), and the Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant. Many colleges and universities use this to determine their institution-specific aid programs, too.

The FAFSA Application for the Class of 2025 (the 2025-26 FAFSA) will not open until December 1st, 2024.

What is the Application for State Financial Aid? Why would I want to complete it?

The [Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid](#) is a similar application that provides a path for some students who do not qualify for federal aid to apply for state and school-funded assistance. **This application is not anticipated to open until December 1st, 2024.**

Undocumented students (who cannot complete the FAFSA) are eligible to receive state-based aid through the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid.

What is the Waiver/Opt-Out Form? Why would I want to complete it?

The **FAFSA Nonparticipation Form** allows parents/guardians and students over the age of 18 to opt-out of completing the FAFSA application. The form must be completed in its entirety, and submitted electronically. **As soon as it is available, we will add the link to this document.**



Which option should I choose to complete?

This is entirely a personal & family decision. Regardless of which option you choose, students must complete one of the three options from above to fulfill their state graduation requirement. **Not completing one of these options is not the same as completing the FAFSA Nonparticipation Form.** A student and their parent/guardian must complete either:

1) the FAFSA; 2) the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid form; or 3) the FAFSA Nonparticipation Form.

If I submit the FAFSA Nonparticipation Form, can I complete the FAFSA at a later date?

Yes! Completing the FAFSA Nonparticipation Form will **not** prevent a student from completing the FAFSA / Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid form at a later date. The student/parent does not need to notify the school – just complete the FAFSA / Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid form as soon as possible.

What if I still have questions regarding the FAFSA / Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid / FAFSA Nonparticipation Form?

There are multiple people you can reach out to with questions. Those include your school counselor, and the College & Career Counselor (Mr. La Porte). You can also reach out to the **Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)**, a state-funded public service staffed by Financial Aid experts, through their **FREE** texting Q&A service!

To use the ISAC College Q&A texting service, just text your first & last name to **(630) 216-4910**, and an ISAC Representative will assist you with your questions.