ISAC's Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

ILASFAA Virtual Fall Workshop

December 6, 2023

A Review of the Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act

- Public Act 101-0021 went into effect January 1, 2020
  - www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=101-0021

- Allows eligible undocumented students who are disqualified from federal financial aid to apply for all forms of state financial aid
  - Includes any student aid or benefit funded or administered by:
    - the state
    - a state agency, or
    - any public institution of higher learning
  - Includes, but not limited to:
    - Scholarships
    - Grants
    - Awards
    - Stipends
    - Free room and board
    - Tuition waivers, or
    - Other financial or in-kind assistance

- Does not exempt students from having to meet general eligibility criteria for ISAC programs as well as criteria specific to each individual program

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RISE Act Provisions

- Undocumented students may be eligible to apply for ISAC programs if they meet all of these criteria (which are based on Illinois statute regarding in-state tuition eligibility):
  - the individual resided with his or her parent or guardian while attending an Illinois public or private high school;
  - the individual graduated from a public or private high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in Illinois;
  - the individual attended school in Illinois for at least 3 years as of the date the individual graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma;
  - the individual provides an affidavit stating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States at the earliest opportunity the individual is eligible to do so; and
  - the individual has not established a residence outside of Illinois.

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Overview of the Alternative Application

- To accommodate RISE Act-eligible students, ISAC created an Illinois-specific online application for the need-based Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant

- It is patterned after the FAFSA and is known as the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

- There are seven sections to the online application
  - Sections 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are about the student
  - Section 4 is about the parent
  - Section 7 is for signatures and certification

- Students should answer all questions as accurately as possible
  - Some fields are optional, but most are required
  - Messaging will be presented for required fields if they are left blank
  - A "Save" button allows applicants to save their data and return to finish at a later time

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What to Expect for 2024-25

- The 2024-25 Alternative Application will:
  - Launch when the 2024-25 FAFSA becomes available
  - Continue to be modeled after the FAFSA and collect much of the same data, with a few important differences
  - Calculate a Student Aid Index (SAI)
  - Continue to be available in Spanish
    - Will provide a more user-friendly process for accessing the Spanish application screens

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What to Expect in 2024-25

- The format and layout of the application will remain the same
- Questions will not always follow the same order as they appear on the FAFSA (paper or online)
- Whenever possible, we have eliminated questions to simplify the application
  - All questions that may appear on the FAFSA will not necessarily be on the 2024-25 Alternative Application
  - However, the application will continue to collect all data elements required to calculate an SAI in the same manner that the FAFSA form does
- The application will continue to have seven sections

✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✏
Section 1	**Section 2**	**Section 3**	Section 4	**Section 5**	**Section 6**	**Section 7**
Student	*Student*	*Student*	*Parent*	*Student*	*Student*	*Review & Signature*

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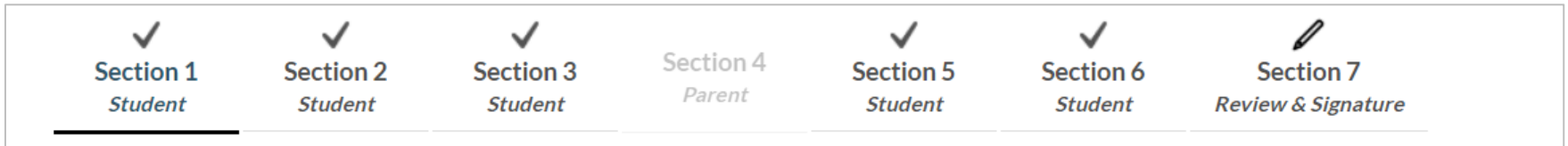
What to Expect in 2024-25

- Nothing is changing with the:
  - Pre-screening or log-in process
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Signature process

- Help text will continue to be provided

- Financial aid administrators will continue to have the ability to make corrections and/or professional judgment adjustments in the MAP system in GAP Access

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Alternative Application − Section 1

- Collects student demographic information
  - New name field: suffix (e.g. Jr. or III)
  - Wording of questions and answer options will be edited to match FAFSA changes
    - College grade level
    - Question about pursuing teacher certification
    - Parents' education status
  - Removing the driver's license questions
  - Student gender, race and ethnicity questions will not be included

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Student Information > Demographics

Your ISAC ID Number ?
865003701

First name ?

Middle name ?

Last name ?

Suffix ?

Date of birth ?

Telephone number ?

Alternative Application − Section 2

- Collects student financial and tax information
  - Data fields and question text have been adjusted to match those on the FAFSA
    - On the paper FAFSA, these are the data elements in Questions 20, 21 and 22
      - Child support received will be added as a data element
  - Spouse fields will be presented to collect financial data if the student indicates a status of married and the student did not file taxes or indicates taxes were filed separately
    - On the paper FAFSA, these are the data elements in Question 25, 27 and 28
      - Application will not require a spouse's signature

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Alternative Application − Section 3

- Collects information about the student's personal circumstances
    - Often referred to as the "dependency questions"
        - Step Three on the current 2023-24 FAFSA
    - Question text has been edited to be consistent with the FAFSA
        - Dependency questions
        - Other circumstances
            - Questions related to homelessness
        - Unusual circumstances
            - To identify a student who may qualify for a dependency override

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ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION FOR ILLINOIS FINANCIAL AID 2024-2025

SAVE

✓	✓					
Section 1	**Section 2**	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6	Section 7
Student	*Student*	*Student*	*Parent*	*Student*	*Student*	*Review & Signature*

Student Information > Tax Information

✓ **Application was successfully saved.**   ✕

Answer these questions about yourself, the student. If you are married or remarried, and you did not file a joint tax return with your spouse, you will be asked to provide additional information about your s

Did or will the student file a 2022 IRS Form 1040 or 1040-NR

⦿ Yes

◯ No

✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	🖉
Section 1	**Section 2**	**Section 3**	Section 4	**Section 5**	**Section 6**	**Section 7**
Student	*Student*	*Student*	*Parent*	*Student*	*Student*	*Review & Signature*

Student Information > Dependency Status

Student's Personal Circumstances – Answer the questions in this section to determine if you will need to provide parental information.
The student is currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training. ❓

◯ Yes

⦿ No

The student is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. ❓

◯ Yes

⦿ No

The student has children or other people (excluding their spouse) who live with the student and receive more than half of their support from the student now and between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. ❓

◯ Yes

⦿ No

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Alternative Application − Section 4

- Collects demographic information about the parent(s) required to provide their data
  - Uses same definition and guidance regarding parent contributor as the FAFSA
  - Data elements are same as FAFSA questions
    - Marital status
    - State of residence
    - Family size
    - Number in household

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Alternative Application – Section 4

- Collects tax and financial information about the parent(s) required to provide their data
- May require Parent Spouse or Partner data, depending on marital and tax filing status
  - Will not require two parent signatures on the application
  - If parent is not married, parent spouse data fields will not be presented
- An email will be required for at least one parent

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Parent Information > Demographics

Your ISAC ID Number ❓

865003701

Answer all the questions in Section Four even if you do not live with your legal parent(s). Legal parents are biological or adoptive, or as determined by the state. Grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, widowed stepparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings are not considered parents on this form unless they have legally adopted the student.

First name ❓

Middle Name ❓

Last name ❓

Suffix ❓

Date of Birth ❓

E-mail address -- We require an e-mail from your parent so ISAC can send them a Personal Identification Number (PIN) that is needed to sign your application. This e-mail will also be shared with the schools you select on your application. ❓

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Alternative Application − Section 5

- Collects additional information about an independent student
    - Family size (number in household)
    - Number in college
    - Receipt of benefits from federal programs
        - By student, spouse or anyone in the family/household

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Number in College Questions

- Although the number in college will not be included in the Student Aid Index calculation, the question will still appear on the 2024-25 FAFSA and the Alternative Application
  - The data is still being collected for institutions that may want to have the data for determining options for institutional aid
    - May be used for professional judgement determinations

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Alternative Application − Section 6

- Collects information about the school choices
  - Will no longer collect information about the housing plans
  - Will allow for up to 10 Illinois school choices
  - Student can log-in at any time and change their school choices

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Section 7 -- Signing the Application

- Step 7 of the application provides the opportunity to review all the data entered
  - Students/parents can navigate back to an appropriate section if a correction or update is needed at this point

- Student signature process
  - Applicants will be provided with a review of the RISE Act eligibility requirements, followed by the Certification/Affidavit, which is part of the RISE Act eligibility requirements
  - If the applicant agrees with the statements on the certification page, they then click on the Provide Signature button and will be presented with a field to enter their PIN
    - The student's PIN is provided by ISAC in an e-mail to the applicant after the Student Demographics page has been completed in Section 1 of the application
    - The student's PIN is associated with the ISAC ID Number that is created and assigned to the student as part of the application process.

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Section 7 -- Signing the Application

- Parent signature process
  - The parent may sign the application after the student has completed their signature process either at the same time, or the parent may log in to the student's application at a separate time
  - To log in, a parent will need the Student's ISAC ID number and the parent PIN, which will be provided to the parent in an e-mail after their e-mail address has been provided on the application
  - The field for the parent address is in Section 4, page 1 and is a required field
    - Once the next button is selected to navigate to page 2 of Section 4, an e-mail will be sent to the parent from ISAC and it will include the parent PIN
  - The student and the parent must have separate e-mails

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Accessing the Application

- The Alternative Application is accessed at isac.org

- Must navigate to the RISE Act information page from the home page
  - Provides information about eligibility requirements
  - The application and resources are available in Spanish

- The Application is not accessible in ISAC's Student Portal or on the general ISAC Applications page with other ISAC program applications

Accessing the Application

- Resources are available to assist with the application process
- These are being updated for 2024-25

Accessing the Application

Pre-Screening Questions

- Pre-screening questions at the beginning of the application help students determine which application (Alternative Application vs. FAFSA) should be completed
  - An applicant will only need to respond to the pre-screening questions if it is their initial application
  - Renewal applicants will not see the pre-screening questions
  - Data provided by applicants in the pre-screening questions is not provided to colleges

- If an applicant's answers to the pre-screening questions indicate the Alternative Application should not be completed, a message will advise them to consult their high school counselor, a financial aid professional, or an ISACorps member for assistance in completing the FAFSA

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Alternative Application Student Profile

- Creating a Student Profile

  - Once a student has completed the pre-screening process and is determined eligible to complete the Alternative Application, the student must complete a Student Profile

  - The applicant should make note of the data used to create their profile

  - The e-mail address provided should be a permanent one that the student will have regular access to (not one used just for high school or college purposes)

  - If the applicant also has an ISAC Student Portal Account, they will need to use a different e-mail than the one used for the Portal

  - Once the Student Profile is complete, ISAC will assign an ISAC ID number that is unique to the student
    - This is a permanent identifier that will remain the same for a student every year

Student Profile

SIGN UP

Account Information   Personal Information

First Name*   Challenge Question*

Last Name*   Challenge Answer*

The e-mail address you provide here will be used each year you apply for ISAC-administered financial aid programs, and to access your application in the future. Make sure to provide a personal, permanent e-mail address (such as gmail, yahoo or hotmail) rather than a school provided e-mail address that will change when you change schools.

E-mail*

Confirm E-mail*

Password must be 8-20 characters, with at least 1 number, 1 upper case letter, 1 lower case letter, and 1 of the following special symbols @#$%&+=

Password*

Confirm Password*

![ISAC logo]

Parent Access to the Application

- Requires the student's ISAC ID Number and the four-digit PIN sent to the parent e-mail address that was provided on the application

Unable to Provide Parent Information

- Dependent students are able to complete the Alternative Application without parental information if they have an unusual circumstance

- **<u>Unacceptable</u>** reasons for not providing parental information:
  - Parents unwilling to provide information
  - Parents refuse to pay for college
  - Parents do not claim student on taxes
  - Student does not live with parents

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Returning Student Access

- Requires the student's Student Profile Username and Password
  - Username is the e-mail address entered when creating the Student Profile
    - It may or may not be the same as the one provided on the application e-mail
  - Password is created by the student and can be updated
  - Challenge question and answer is created by the student and can be updated

Alternative Application - Corrections

- Any of the data elements, except the ISAC-assigned ID number, can be corrected or updated by the student

- In general, a student should not update information that was correct as of the date it was initially signed and submitted
    - Like the FAFSA, it's considered to be a "snapshot" of the family's financial situation as of that date

- All corrections will require the student to re-sign the application

- If changes are made to parent data, the parent will need to re-sign the app as well
    - Parent will need the student's ISAC ID number and the parent PIN to log in

- Each time a correction or update is made, a new transaction will be generated

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Alternative Application Resources

- Alternative Application User Guide
    - Intended as a resource for students, parents and counselors
    - Includes information on how to reset a password, update an email address, make corrections, etc.
    - Includes several FAQs at the end of the guide as well as resource links

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Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid FAQs

(last updated October 3, 2022)

Click on a question (below) to access the corresponding answer.

Q. Who should complete the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid?

A. *This application is only for students who are not eligible for federal student financial aid, including qualified undocumented students.* Most students will still complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) to apply for financial aid. If you are not sure whether you should complete this Alternative Application or the FAFSA, the pre-screening questions at the beginning of the Alternative Application will help you to determine which application you should file. We also encourage you to talk with your school counselor or the financial aid office at your college or university to learn which application to file.

Q. What kinds of financial aid can I receive by completing the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid?

Q. If I am eligible to complete and submit the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid, does that mean I am guaranteed to get a MAP grant?

Q. The criteria to complete the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid says that I had to have graduated from high school to be eligible to complete it, so if I'm currently a senior in high school, does that mean I have to wait until after I actually graduate to complete the application?

Q. Are international students or students whose parents are in the U.S. on a work visa eligible to complete the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid and apply for MAP?

About The ISACorps

College And Career Exploration And Planning

Financial Aid Planning

Completing The FAFSA®

RISE Act/Alternative Application

Alternative Application FAQs

Alternative Application User Guide & FAQs

Accessing & Updating Your Alternative Application Student Profile

2023-24 Alternative Application Worksheet

Types Of Financial Aid

Making An Informed College Choice

Outreach Activities/Event Calendar

Alternative Application Resources

- Alternative Application Worksheet
  - Patterned after the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet

- Helps student know what to expect
  - Documents needed
  - What questions are asked
  - What the student certification and parent signature sections includes
- Alternative Application Worksheet should not be submitted to ISAC

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Alternative Application Worksheet

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Alternative Application or FAFSA?

- A student should complete either the FAFSA or the Alternative Application, depending on their eligibility and other considerations in determining which application to file

- In general, a student should not complete both applications, however, please note the following exceptions:
  - If the student filed an Alternative Application, but then becomes eligible for federal aid, it would be acceptable to file a FAFSA for the same award year.
  - If the student filed a FAFSA and it was rejected due to their citizenship status, they are encouraged to file an Alternative Application for the same award year if they meet all RISE Act eligibility requirements

2023-24 Application Volume

Alternative Applications for 2023-2024

As of 12/04/2023

Total Number of Applications Started
4172

Total Number of Applications Completed
3311

Completed: 3311
Pending: 861

English: 3210
Spanish: 101
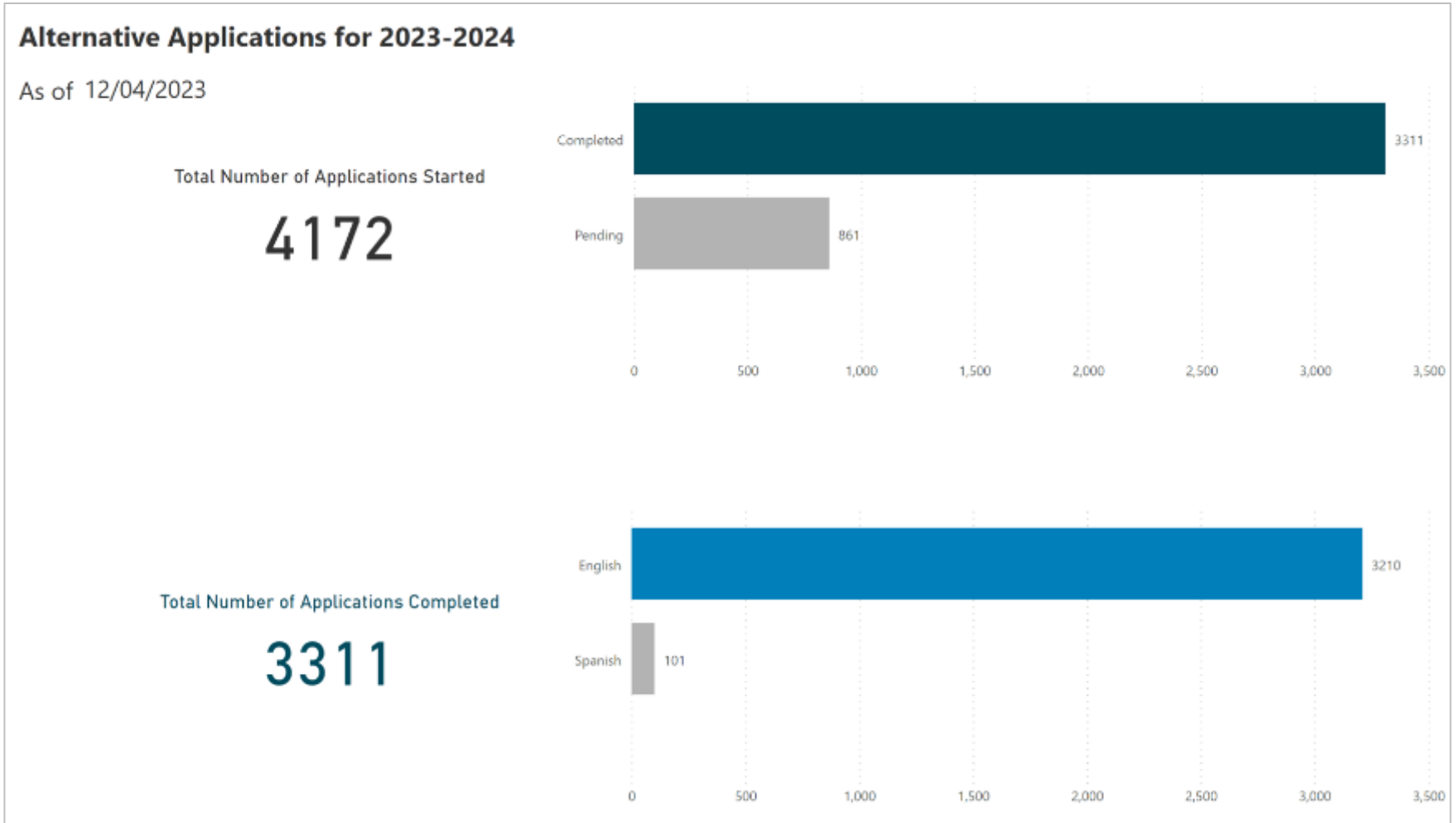
2022-23 Application Volume

Alternative Applications for 2022-2023

As of 05/29/2023

Total Number of Applications Started

4317

Completed	3238
Pending	1079

(axis: 0, 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000, 3,500)

Total Number of Applications Completed

3238

English	3155
Spanish	83

(axis: 0, 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000, 3,500)

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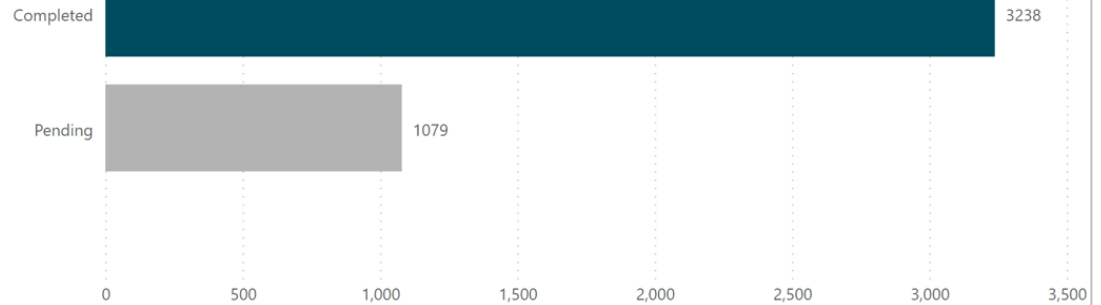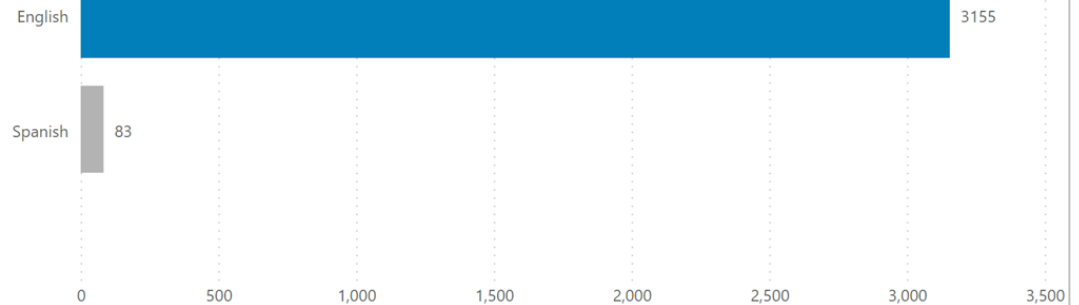
2024-25 Alternative Application

- 2024-25 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid will coincide with the launch of the 2024-25 FAFSA
- Changes have been made to the application to be consistent with the 2024-25 FAFSA to collect all data elements required to calculate an SAI
- The application will continue to be available in English and Spanish
  - Help text will also be available in Spanish

Home › Students & Parents › Before College - Planning › Financial Aid Planning › RISE Act/Alternative Application ›

Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act and Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

En Español

Access the application here

ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION FOR ILLINOIS FINANCIAL AID

Intended for qualifying undocumented students

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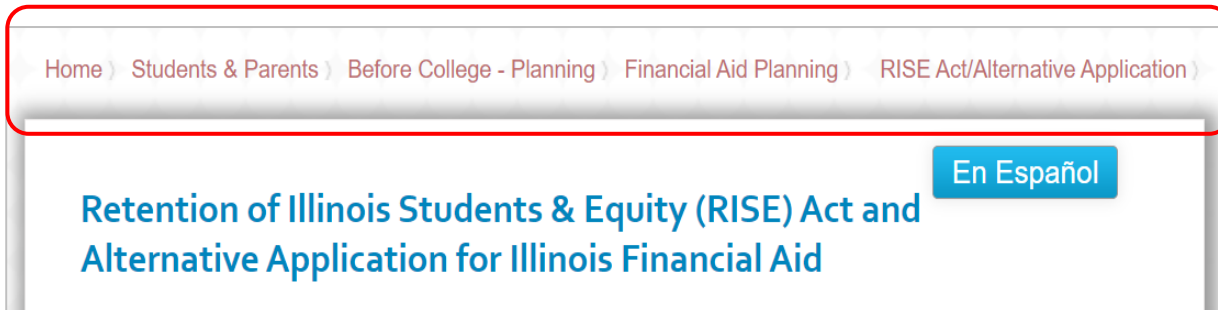
MAP 160-Byte File Layout Specifications

- The final file layout for 2024-25 MAP processing has been posted to the Electronic Tools section of the E-Library

- For 2024-25, these data elements are no longer included on the file:
  - Student Social Security number (SSN)
  - Student Last Name (previously an optional field)
  - Original SSN
  - Name ID

- These Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data elements were removed to protect student identity when transmitting files between ISAC and colleges.

- The student's Person Universally Unique Identifier (UUID) that is assigned to the student by the Department of Education (ED) by the FAFSA Processing System (FPS) will replace the SSN on the file
  - The Person UUID field is 36 characters in length, and the total number of characters being removed is also 36, so the length of the file will not change
  - The Person UUID will stay the same for the student across FAFSA cycles
  - ISAC will generate and a Person UUID for Alternative Application applicants

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Questions/Comments

Thank you for attending today!

ISAC Contact Information

School Services

866-247-2172

isac.schoolservices@illinois.gov

ISAC Call Center – Student Services

800-899-4722

isac.studentservices@illinois.gov

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