



Higher Education Agencies Encouraged By Steady Funding For Education Amidst Pandemic Challenges

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SPRINGFIELD— Despite budget woes stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. JB Pritzker recommended several increases for programs to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in his budget address. State higher education leaders say they are grateful that Gov. Pritzker is continuing his commitment to higher education during these unprecedented times. Higher education funding for public universities and community colleges in Illinois would remain mostly flat for fiscal year 2022 as outlined in the governor's budget address.

Overall, the governor's budget proposal would put higher education funding in Illinois at \$2.097 billion.

Funding in this proposal would include:

- \$1.158 billion for public universities
- \$249 million for community colleges and adult education
- \$28 million in additional dollars for MAP (total \$479 million)
- \$35 million (flat funding) for AIM HIGH
- \$20 million in first-year funding for College Illinois!®
- \$1 million in new money for the Common Application
- \$250,000 in new money for strategic planning implementation.

IBHE also expects \$8 million for community colleges and \$12 million for IBHE from supplemental federal relief funds recently passed by congress.

Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Executive Director Ginger Ostro said, "This budget is a 'win' for higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional dollars for programs like MAP and the Common App will help low-income students and

students of color stay on their college path. Maintaining support for our higher education institutions provides stability at a time when so much is uncertain. We are grateful for Gov. Pritzker's on-going investments in higher education, even during challenging fiscal times."

"Gov. Pritzker's commitment to access and equity have already helped bring MAP funding to a historic high, and MAP continues to be critical as students face increasing financial hurdles as a result of the pandemic," said Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) Executive Director Eric Zarnikow. "The proposed increase of \$28 million in MAP would help our low-income students as they try to keep up with rising costs and should allow us to reach new students as well. And for those students who will be attending school using College Illinois!® Prepaid Tuition Program benefits, the proposal to begin addressing the program's shortfall with a first manageable payment honors the state's commitments to these families and can help save the state money in the long run."

"Despite ongoing economic challenges created by the worst health crisis of our lifetime, we are encouraged by Gov. Pritzker's recommendation that funding for higher education, including Illinois' community colleges, hold steady in fiscal year 2022. As the nation's third largest community college system, more than half a million students use Illinois' 39 community colleges for at least a part of their education each year. It is critical we continue to provide local educational opportunities for people of all ages to help better their lives and get our economy back on track," said Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Executive Director Brian Durham.

The Common App funding would make Illinois the first state with all public four-year universities using one application.