

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the College Planning Act.

Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

"Commission" means the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

"Program" means the College Planning Program established under Section 10 of this Act.

Section 10. College Planning Program; establishment. The College Planning Program is established to do all of the following:

(1) Reduce the number of students who withdraw from high school before graduation.

(2) Reduce the number of students who fail to begin planning for a postsecondary educational path upon entering high school.

(3) Increase the number of high school students who are prepared to enter postsecondary educational institutions in this State upon graduation.

(4) Increase the number of students attaining a quality

postsecondary credential within 6 years after graduation from high school.

(5) Assist this State in meeting the workforce needs of the future.

(6) Encourage students to attend postsecondary educational institutions in this State by increasing awareness of the need-based, financial aid programs available to State residents attending postsecondary educational institutions in this State.

(7) Increase timely financial aid application rates among students from the lowest economic quintiles in this State.

(8) Proactively counsel potential college students to make the most efficient and effective use of need-based, grant funding distributed under the Monetary Award Program under Section 35 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act.

(9) Intervene beginning in 8th grade to aggressively promote postsecondary education as a positive alternative to less socially and economically desirable behaviors and options that young students may consider instead of college preparation.

Section 15. Administration.

(a) The Commission shall administer the Program.

(b) The Commission shall utilize the Program to target

low-income and potential first-generation college students with programs to promote college awareness and planning.

(c) The Commission shall adopt any rules that it deems necessary to implement the mission of the Program, including without limitation rules regarding a student's record of attendance at events, the determination of qualifying events and programs, information required on the initial application and annual certification, and appeals.

Section 20. Qualifications to participate in the Program. To qualify to participate in the Program, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

(1) He or she must reside in this State.

(2) At the time of application to the Program, he or she must be enrolled in grade 8 at a public school in this State or a nonpublic school that is recognized by the State Board of Education and, by the end of grade 8, be enrolled in a public high school in this State or a nonpublic school that is recognized by the State Board of Education.

(3) At the time of enrollment in the Program, he or she either (i) must not have a custodial parent or guardian who has received a postsecondary degree or (ii) must be eligible to participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program under the School Breakfast and Lunch Program Act.

(4) He or she agrees, in writing, together with the student's custodial parent or guardian, that the student

will do all of the following:

(A) Complete the course requirements specified in Section 27-22 of the School Code and graduate from a secondary school located in this State.

(B) Not be convicted of a felony offense that would disqualify the student from receipt of federal student aid.

(C) Timely apply, during grade 12, (i) for admission to a postsecondary institution in this State approved to participate in the Monetary Award Program under Section 35 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act and (ii) for any federal and State student financial assistance available to the student to attend a postsecondary institution in this State.

(D) Achieve a cumulative grade point average upon graduation from high school of at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 grading scale (or its equivalent if another grading scale is used) for courses taken during grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

(E) Update demographic and contact information required within the initial Program participation application and agreement at least once each academic year on a schedule to be determined by the Commission.

(F) Take a recognized standardized college entrance examination no later than the end of the 11th grade.

(G) Participate in college planning and preparation activities required by the Commission as part of the administration of the Program.

(H) Share personal academic and financial data with the Commission beginning in grade 8 and through the attainment of a bachelor's degree.

Section 25. Program benefits. Subject to appropriation of State, federal, or private funds, the Commission shall deliver the following services and benefits to students enrolled in the Program:

(1) College and career planning counseling provided by the College Illinois! Corps.

(2) Assistance with the completion of college admission, scholarship, and financial aid applications, provided by the College Illinois! Corps.

(3) The opportunity to participate in simplified admission or financial assistance application programs administered by the Commission.

(4) Regular communication about important dates and procedures in the college planning cycle as well as estimates of future financial aid eligibility.

(5) Priority notification of eligibility for Commission-administered, need-based, financial aid programs.

(6) Ongoing college and career counseling while

enrolled in a postsecondary institution in this State.

(7) An assigned college planning counselor for the duration of enrollment in the Program.

(8) Invitation to participant-only college and career planning workshops for the student and his or her parents or guardian.

Section 30. Program disqualification. If a program participant fails to meet the requirements for continuation in the Program, the student is disqualified from future receipt of Program services and benefits that are not available to all students in this State.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.