

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



The Partnership for College Completion champions policies, practices, and systems that increase college completion and eliminate degree completion disparities for low-income, first generation, and students of color in Illinois—particularly Black and Latinx students.

In order to build toward a prosperous and equitable future in Illinois, the state needs an **adequate, equitable, and stable** higher education funding system in which every institution can provide appropriate academic, financial, and social-emotional supports to improve college access and success.

Now more than ever we need to elevate our collective voice to urge legislators to champion **#EquityNowILHE** because equity in Illinois' higher education matters.

This advocacy toolkit is designed to be a resource for students, college and university faculty and staff, organizational advocates—anyone who is interested in fighting for more equitable outcomes in higher education.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Sonniane Lozada, Community Engagement Manager at slozada@partnershipfcc.org

4 WAYS ILLINOIS CAN ADVANCE EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1

Invest an additional \$50 million in the Monetary Award Program (MAP) each year to reach \$1 Billion in MAP funding over 10 years. This significant yearly increase in MAP will ensure all students with financial need have the financial support to start and finish their degree.

2

Support Accountability mechanisms that strengthen affordable and equitable access to high-quality postsecondary degrees and credentials. The state must hold agencies and institutions accountable for equitably serving students, while protecting Illinoisans from companies that are using the promise of higher education to saddle students with unmanageable bills and debt.

3

Students of all races, economic backgrounds, and geographic locations deserve access to high-quality postsecondary education that is aligned with their educational and career aspirations and that addresses society's most pressing challenges. Revamping Illinois's higher education funding systems to add clear accountability and incentives for serving a student body representative of the demographics of the state and adequately funding the institutions currently serving Illinois' low-income students and underrepresented student groups, will also help ensure that opportunities and positive student outcomes are not dependent on which public college or university a student attends.

4

Support legislation that creates an equitable higher education funding model. Illinois may be the only state that appropriates its public university base without any kind of formula. To address this issue, the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding, created in 2021 by SB815, will be researching and recommending an equity-centered model to the General Assembly by July 1, 2023.

ANNUAL ADVOCACY DAY



Join us in Springfield for our Annual Higher Education Advocacy Day! Spend a day alongside other higher education advocates elevating your voice to urge your state elected officials to support equity-centered public policies for Illinois' Higher Education system.

On Advocacy Day, you will have the opportunity to meet with lawmakers, and their teams to provide information about the issues as well as share some of your own related personal experiences going to a college or university in Illinois.

Never been to Springfield before? Don't have any experience advocating? Don't worry, we will provide you with all the resources you will need for this trip including: transportation, meals, materials, and training!

Sample Agenda:

- **6:15a:** Leave for Springfield (*Transportation Provided*)
- **10:00a:** Arrive in Springfield
- **10:30a–12:00p:** Legislator Meetings
- **12:00p–1:00p:** Lunch
- **1:00p:** Rally in the Rotunda
- **2:00p–3:30p:** Legislator Meetings
- **4:00p:** Board buses back to Chicago

MAY IS DIGITAL ADVOCACY MONTH



Call your State Senator or Representative, urge them to vote for legislation that supports the enhancement of equitable opportunities in Higher Education in Illinois. You can also call them to thank them for supporting specific legislation.



Send an email to your State Senator or Representative, urge them to prioritize equity in higher education passing legislation that invests in colleges and universities and critical support services by increasing MAP funding. Share a personal story one that directly or indirectly impacted you.



Raise your voice on social media with #EquityNowILHE. Find some time each week during the month of May to post an image, a tweet, a status or even a video to elevate the importance of equity in Illinois higher education. Create something from scratch or re-share images from pages you follow. The most important thing is to bring awareness to this issue.



Social Media Image Post Examples

SAMPLE TWEETS

Access: All Illinois College students deserve equitable access to their post-secondary experience that is aligned with both their professional and personal aspirations.

'Revamping Illinois' funding systems ensure that opportunities and positive student outcomes are not dependent on which public college or university a student attends.



Accountability: Accountability mechanisms in higher education, strengthen access in affordability and equity for Illinois College students.

The state must hold agencies and institutions accountable for equitably serving students.



MAP: Investing significantly in MAP annually creates opportunities for Illinois students with financial need to start and finish their degree.



Equitable Funding: Illinois needs an adequate, equitable, and stable higher education funding system to ensure every institution can provide the proper support to improve college access and success.

Currently, Illinois is the only state that appropriates its public university base without any funding formula.



Key Days of Action

May 4, 2021: Call-in Day

May 11, 2022: Write-in Day

May 18, 2022: Twitter Storm

May 25, 2022: TAKE ACTION Day

STATE ELECTED OFFICIAL EMAIL TEMPLATE

Find your elected official

[🔍 Here](#)

Don't forget to mention you are a constituent if you live, work or go to school in their district.

Dear Honorable *(Insert Name)*

In Illinois, disinvestment, racial and socioeconomic gaps in access, and inequitable distribution of state funds have led to Black, Latinx students and students from low-income families in Illinois to pay some of the highest college costs in the nation. The state's public colleges and universities that disproportionately serve students from low-income households and students of color are also its most financially vulnerable. And although these institutions need more funding to support students, they instead receive a fraction of the state's annual appropriations.

It has been my experience that... *(Insert your personal story here or you can also share an experience of someone you may know that experienced inequity during their college experience. Make sure to keep it concise and focused. You want your reader to get through this entire letter without losing their focus.)*

In order to build toward a prosperous and equitable future, Illinois needs an adequate, equitable, and stable higher education funding system to ensure every institution can provide adequate academic, financial, and social-emotional supports to improve college access and success. Therefore, we urge you to vote and support policies that create more equitable opportunities for Illinois' Public University students.

Sincerely,

Insert Name

Organization if you're representing one or school, etc.

TALKING POINTS

- 1.** In Illinois, disinvestment, racial and socioeconomic gaps in access, and inequitable distribution of state funds have led to Black, Latinx students and students from low-income families in Illinois to pay some of the highest college costs in the nation.
- 2.** The state's public colleges and universities that disproportionately serve students from low-income households and students of color are also its most financially vulnerable.
- 3.** These institutions need more funding to support students, instead they receive a fraction of the state's annual appropriations.
- 4.** In order to build toward a prosperous and equitable future, Illinois needs an adequate, equitable, and stable higher education funding system to ensure every institution can provide adequate academic, financial, and social-emotional supports to improve college access and success.
- 5.** The MAP Grant is one of the most powerful ways to create equitable opportunities for Illinois College students. A \$50 million increase in MAP Grant funding can create access for 15,000 more students in the state of Illinois. **MAP is shown to be effective in helping low-income and minority students enroll in and complete college. A \$50M additional annual investment in MAP is estimated to ensure that all students can continue to be served and that a MP will cover 50% of average tuition and fees in 10 years.**

By taking a stand to remove structural barriers to students achieving their college aspirations, and advocating for what will support all of Illinois' students, your leadership in this area is helping students advance themselves toward reaching their dreams.

With the right information, tools, and resources and supportive policy conditions, all students can graduate from college.

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