



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IBHE Approves Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Recommendations

Budget recommendations ensure the continued implementation of strategic initiatives

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) approved a fiscal year 2027 recommended budget that increases funding to continue to support the implementation of the higher education strategic plan, [Thriving Illinois](#), meant to remove barriers and advance equity across the state's higher education system. The approved budget recommends an overall 4.5% increase, which represents an increase of \$121.5 million, in higher education funding, excluding the State University Retirement System (SURS) pensions.

"The Board has approved a recommended budget for fiscal year 2027 that takes into account the state's fiscal projections, the fiscal realities of our institutions and our students and families along with the work needed to close equity gaps," **said IBHE Chair Pranav Kothari**. "Even in tight budget years, we must continue to prioritize higher education in Illinois. We are grateful for Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly's meaningful investments in higher education."

"The Board's budget recommendations are a testament to our commitment to continue to make progress toward a more equitable and affordable higher education system in Illinois," **said IBHE Executive Director Ginger Ostro**. "Increased investments to the MAP and AIM HIGH grant programs throughout the last several fiscal years have made our public institutions more affordable for students, and this budget recommends increased investment in both programs. Increased financial assistance along with One Click College Admit, the state's new direct admissions program, are removing barriers to access and completion for Illinois students."

IBHE's recommended budget includes an increase of \$5 million for the Aspirational Institutional Match Helping Illinois Grow Higher Education (AIM HIGH) grant program and an increase of \$50 million for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), bringing the total MAP appropriation to \$771.6 million. This increase would make progress toward reaching the Board's goal of increasing funding for MAP to \$1 billion within 10 years to cover at least 50% of tuition and fees at Illinois public universities and community colleges, as set out in the higher education strategic plan in 2021.

Nearly 80% of Pell-eligible students attended Illinois public universities tuition and fee free in academic year 2024-2025 as a result of continued funding increases to the MAP and AIM HIGH grant programs, according to a recent report from IBHE. Increasing affordability through these state grant programs and increasing access through the state's direct admissions program, [One Click College Admit](#), are key strategies in enabling Illinois talent to study and work in Illinois.

The recommended budget also includes a \$38.8 million (3%) increase in operating funding for public universities to continue closing equity gaps in access, persistence and completion. Like in immediate past years, the Board recommends that the funds be allocated using an equity lens to allow universities to provide the supports students need to ensure their success, particularly for historically marginalized populations and for students from low-income households.

The state's community colleges are instrumental in meeting the state's education and workforce needs. To ensure community colleges continue to prepare students to enter the workforce, IBHE is also recommending a \$10.6 million (3%) increase in funding for community colleges, adult education and career and technical education.

Additionally, the budget recommends an increase of \$3 million for scholarships to support the upskilling of the current early childhood workforce and a \$1 million increase for the Supporting Universities and Colleges in Creating Equitable Student Success (SUCCESS) program to help institutions meet student basic needs and provide other supports to ensure student success..

Highlights include:

- \$50 million increase for MAP
- \$5 million increase for AIM HIGH
- \$38.8 million (3%) increase in operating funding for public universities
- \$10.6 million (3%) increase in funding for community colleges, adult education and career and technical education
- \$3 million increase for Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarships
- \$1 million increase for the Supporting Universities and Colleges in Creating Equitable Student Success (SUCCESS) program

The full fiscal year 2027 recommended budget can be accessed [here](#).

The budget recommendation next goes to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and the General Assembly for consideration.

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About Illinois Board of Higher Education

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is the planning and coordinating body for the state's higher education system. In June 2021, IBHE adopted the new strategic plan, "A Thriving Illinois," to accomplish three goals: close the equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind, build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions, and increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth.