Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program

APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR 2018-19 AWARDS: Postmarked by March 1, 2018


ISAC Call Center at 800.899.ISAC (4722)

Please see the ISAC website above for application and details. Information on the 2018-19 academic year was updated on Dec. 20, 2017. This is a summary of information which provides full tuition & fee waivers for special education majors at the 11 state universities:

Because this program is a tuition waiver for attendance at public universities in Illinois, awards are not subject to annual appropriations by the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor.

If you are a teacher or an academically talented student pursuing a career in special education as a nonprofit public, private or parochial preschool, elementary or secondary school teacher in Illinois, you may be eligible for the Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver Program. This program will exempt you from paying tuition and mandatory fees at an eligible institution, for up to four calendar years. Mandatory fees are those assessed by a college to every full-time student for each term. Examples include fees for activities, facility operations, grants, health, registration, technology, transportation and others. The college determines fees that are considered mandatory.

By receiving the tuition waiver, you must teach in Illinois in the field of special education. If this teaching commitment is not fulfilled, the amount of benefits received converts to a loan, and you must repay the entire amount plus interest. Those recipients who are pursuing or have secured a position as a Speech-Language Pathologist should take note that in order to fulfill the teaching requirements, their position must be that of a “teacher”, as certified by their employing school official. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) defines a “teacher” as a person who provides direct classroom-type teaching or classroom-type teaching in a non-classroom setting. Accordingly, only if a Speech-Language Pathologist’s teaching position meets the above definition, and is certified as such by the school official, would the position be considered as fulfilling the SETTW teaching requirements.

Eligibility

To be eligible, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen
- Be an Illinois resident
- Meet one of the following conditions: you graduated from an approved high school; or you are scheduled to graduate from an approved high school by the end of the academic year in which the award is made and you performed in the upper half of your graduating class according to performance-based academic data provided by the high school; or you hold a valid teaching certificate that is not in the discipline of special education
- Be enrolled, or accepted for enrollment, at one of the eligible public four-year colleges in Illinois (providing the institution offers a concentration in Special Education) as an undergraduate or graduate student seeking initial certification in any area of special education
- Be enrolled in a program of special education within 10 days after the beginning of the term for which the waiver was initially awarded
- Not at any time have received cumulative Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver benefits that equal or exceed the program maximum of four calendar years
- Complete the application process by:
  - submitting a fully-completed Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver Program application, which includes the Teaching Agreement/Promissory Note (in order to receive priority consideration for an award, the complete application must be received at ISAC on or before the March 1 immediately preceding the academic year for which the tuition waiver is requested),
  - being certified as meeting eligibility requirements by the college at which you will use the scholarship, and
  - accepting the scholarship (if one is offered)*
- Sign the application's Teaching Agreement/Promissory Note promising to fulfill the teaching commitment or repay funds received plus interest
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by your college
• Remain in attendance at the college on a continuous basis for up to four years (unless granted an approved leave of absence, in which case the course of study must be completed within six years)
• Not be in default on any student loan, nor owe a refund on any state or federal grant. If you are in default, you may re-establish your eligibility.
• Comply with federal Selective Service registration requirements
• Not receive funds from the Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship Program or the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program during the same term(s) for which you receive funds from the Illinois SETTW Program.

How to Apply
To apply, you must obtain the Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Application by clicking here, or by requesting it from ISAC, eligible institutions or offices of Regional Superintendents of Education in Illinois, or state legislative and federal congressional offices. Submit your complete application to ISAC's Deerfield office postmarked on or before March 1 immediately preceding the initial academic year for which you are requesting the tuition waiver, in order to receive priority consideration. Applications postmarked after that date will be given consideration for the award if, after the initial round of awarding, funding all 250 available tuition waivers have not been awarded. Once you're awarded the tuition waiver, you do not need to reapply for consideration for additional years. If you are eligible for the Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver, you will receive a notice of eligibility by July 1.

When a new Illinois SETTW recipient is named, the college must provide ISAC with verification of the student’s enrollment and program eligibility. The college is also asked to verify the recipient’s enrollment and continued eligibility status for each academic year that the tuition waiver is renewed.

Eligible Public Four-year Institutions in Illinois
(providing the institution offers a concentration in special education)
• 001694 Chicago State University
• 001674 Eastern Illinois University
• 009145 Governors State University
• 001692 Illinois State University
• 001693 Northeastern Illinois University
• 001737 Northern Illinois University
• 001758 Southern Illinois University – Carbondale
• 001759 Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville
• 001776 University of Illinois – Chicago
• 001775 University of Illinois – Urbana
• 001780 Western Illinois University