The Illinois Promise program is one of our most significant scholarship programs at Illinois. For nearly fifteen years, we have provided funding, mentorship, and opportunity to over 2,000 students who have gone on to do amazing things.

We are very excited to report that we were able to extend an Illinois education to even more students this year. In fact, we welcomed over 480 new Illinois Promise students this fall! I am extremely proud of our students, and I admire their hard work and ambition. I am also proud that so many alumni and donors share our desire to support these students as they embark on one of the most life-changing journeys of their lives. Thank you!

With you and With Illinois, these students will change the world.

— Robert J. Jones, Chancellor
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
In 2018-2019, Illinois Promise served over 1,200 bright and talented undergraduates who come from a variety of backgrounds and study in disciplines across all of our academic colleges.

It has made the biggest impact, especially since I am a first generation student. I know my family looks up to me for going to college and all I can do is set the example that if I can do it, so can anyone else. I-Promise gave me an opportunity I never thought was possible. I will forever be grateful.

- Demisha Ramirez, Journalism '19

7 out of 10 I-Promise students identify as first generation college students.
I-Promise Scholars qualify for and receive federal, state, institutional, and/or private grants and scholarships including a limited amount of student loans and an opportunity to secure campus-based employment. For many, however, that aid does not match their full need. The I-Promise award closes the gap between a student’s cost of attendance and the other financial aid they receive. In the 2018-2019 academic year, I-Promise funding totaled $9,584,390.50.

Donors make a difference by opening doors of opportunity to high achieving students to join the Illinois family as they make their way toward a bright future. The university is committed to providing the Illinois Promise Scholarship to all students who are eligible. With the number of qualified students increasing each year, the generosity of donors is critical in maintaining access to an Illinois education.

$8,496.80
Average I-Promise Award Per Student (per year)

On average, 25% of an I-Promise Scholar’s educational expenses are covered by the scholarship

“I have a passion for education and for helping deserving students achieve the dream of a college degree. I am honored to be a donor to the Illinois Promise program. I have been providing scholarships for high school students in my local community for twenty-two years. Now I am happy to give back to students who wish to attend my alma mater through the Illinois Promise program. My goal is to reward past success and encourage students to complete their college education.”

— Merrilee Lewis Engel, Ph.D. (LAS ’64, ’68, ’69)
President Emeritus, Cosumnes River College

Illinois Promise made it possible for me to attend Illinois debt free. Coming from a low income family, I wasn’t sure how I would pay for higher education but Illinois Promise alleviated that burden from me and my family. Illinois Promise is an excellent scholarship and I am grateful that I was able to be a part of Illinois Promise during my undergraduate career.

— James Jones, Political Science ’19

Being an Illinois Promise Scholar was transformative. The generous support of donors has done more for me than just granting relief on my financial burdens. It has provided me with the opportunity to take time to invest in myself. I am now working full time at my dream company, trying to make a difference in the agricultural community. Because of I-Promise, I am inspired to give back to others and my community.

— Alyssa Pedersen, Agricultural and Consumer Economics ’19
THE SUPPORT

I-Promise brings scholars together for signature events and programming throughout their time at Illinois. Beginning with orientation and continuing with a variety of gatherings each term, students have many opportunities to engage with peers and staff. In addition, one third of each new class elects to participate in our one-of-a-kind mentoring program and are matched with a staff or faculty member, graduate student, or community volunteer as a resource and guide. Scholars also connect with an I-Promise staff member who, as an assigned coach, provides individualized support and academic monitoring.

In 2018-2019, support for scholars included:

- **NEW SCHOLAR ORIENTATION**
  Over 300 new scholars gathered for community building and an interactive program introduction.

- **SCHOLAR SOCIALS**
  From picnics to ice skating, hundreds of scholars came together for events sponsored by the I-Promise Council.

- **MENTORING**
  120 students were matched with a mentor and averaged higher GPA and retention rates than non-participants.

- **COACHING**
  Our team logged over 1,700 individual student contacts, up more than 100% since the coaching model was introduced.

- **ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**
  We hosted a suite of unique events with partners like Teach for America, Peace Corps, The Career Center and more.

- **AWARDS BANQUET**
  Participation increased 50% and 1 in 4 graduates received I-Promise Distinction cords for earning a 3.5 GPA or higher.

- **2018-2019 Featured Initiative: PROFESSIONAL SYMPOSIUM**
  With the theme “Success beyond the Classroom,” our inaugural symposium hosted over 200 scholars and included 6 break-out sessions focused on undergraduate research, study abroad, national & international scholarships, networking, internship and employment experiences, and pursuing personal passions.

- **2018-2019 Featured Initiative: PASSPORT CARAVAN**
  We partnered with Illinois Abroad and Global Exchange (IAGE) to offer I-Promise Scholars a U.S. passport at no charge. Over 100 I-Promise Scholars completed the process and are now passport-ready for their first international experience.

- **2018-2019 Featured Initiative: CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE**
  In Spring 2019, in partnership with the College of Education and the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, we offered a course specifically for Illinois Promise Scholars. “Navigating Cultural Systems,” brought 20 I-Promise Scholars together for meaningful dialogue and course credit.

“Illinois Promise has matched me with a mentor who invests tremendous time and care into my well-being. It has also given me an I-Promise coach who helps me find ongoing resources and guidance.”

- Emily File, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences ‘20 and Laura Gerhold, I-Promise Mentor
While the I-Promise Scholarship opens the door of opportunity to an Illinois education, it is the scholars who make the most of the experience and create unique pathways to successful futures. Highlights from 2018-2019 include:

**“The support I received helped me navigate the toughest moments of my life; sponsored me for a leadership retreat; helped me build a network that landed me an internship with a local hospital; and assisted in drafting successful study abroad scholarship applications that resulted in volunteering in Guatemala.”**

- Ashley Tovar-DeLeon, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences ’20

**“I was able to pursue a study abroad program in Costa Rica that focused on transforming their economy by incorporating renewable energy and other sustainable practices. It culminated in a research project about ways to mitigate traffic congestion in urban areas. I wouldn't have had this opportunity were it not for the support of the Illinois Promise program.”**

- Max Thang, Economics ’20

**“As a result of being on this campus and talking to different mentors within my college and I-Promise, I have never been more open to seeking new journeys, opportunities, and life lessons. During my time at Illinois, I was inducted into the Alpha Lambda Delta honor society; joined the Army National Guard; and even secured an internship with Carle.”**

- Dejia’ Smith, Human Development and Family Studies ’19

**“In addition to the financial impact, Illinois Promise has connected me with amazing friends and colleagues and provided me with many resources that I would not have known about otherwise.”**

- Matea Larrieu, Global Studies ’19

**“Working with an I-Promise alum and I-Promise staff, I received the support and advice I needed for my professional and career development, which led me to my current role with Molson Coors in Denver. I’m so excited to see what the future holds and I look forward to giving back to Illinois Promise Scholars in the years to come.”**

- Jonathan Sanchez, double major Information Systems & Information Technology and Management ’19

**“Illinois Promise has supported my leadership development in so many ways—from being a part of our student leadership group (Illinois Promise Council) to my position in the Illinois Leadership Center to working as an on-site coordinator for The Institute by Leadershape. Illinois Promise isn't just a scholarship; it provides the access that will open new doors of opportunity throughout my lifetime”**

- Johana Machuca, dual degree Spanish and Speech & Hearing Science ’21
THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE PROMISE!

ILLINOIS PROMISE

ipromise.illinois.edu

Campus Center for Advising and Academic Services
807 S. Wright St., Floor 5
Champaign, IL 61820

ipromise@illinois.edu
217-333-4710
ipromise.illinois.edu