

The Financial Aid Process

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About Me

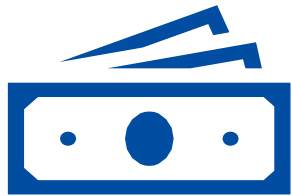
- I recently graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a degree in political science
- I can help with the college and financial aid processes
- Here to answer any questions about college or financial aid
- All my services and assistance are completely FREE
- Work at an organization called ISAC in a program called the ISACorps

About ISAC

The college access and financial aid agency in Illinois



- Administers different types of financial aid programs
 - Grants
 - Scholarships
 - Prepaid tuition
 - Student loan repayment & forgiveness



- Our mission is to provide students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable

Ask Questions!

- There are many things to consider
- Some common questions include:
 - How much does college cost?
 - What is financial aid?
 - When and how do I apply?
- What other things come to mind?
- Ask me, I'm here to help!



Postsecondary Education

- An institution of higher education that awards a degree or credential post-high school graduation
- Includes, but is not limited to, universities, colleges, and trade schools

Vocational/Trade

▪ Up to 2 years

Associate's Degree

▪ 2 years

Bachelor's Degree

▪ 4 years

Master's Degree

▪ Bachelor's plus 1-3 years

What is financial aid?

- Money to help students pay for college
- There are different types of aid (not just student loans)
- Comes from different sources
- Can be ***given, borrowed, or earned***
- Helps cover the gap between what you can afford to pay and the cost of college

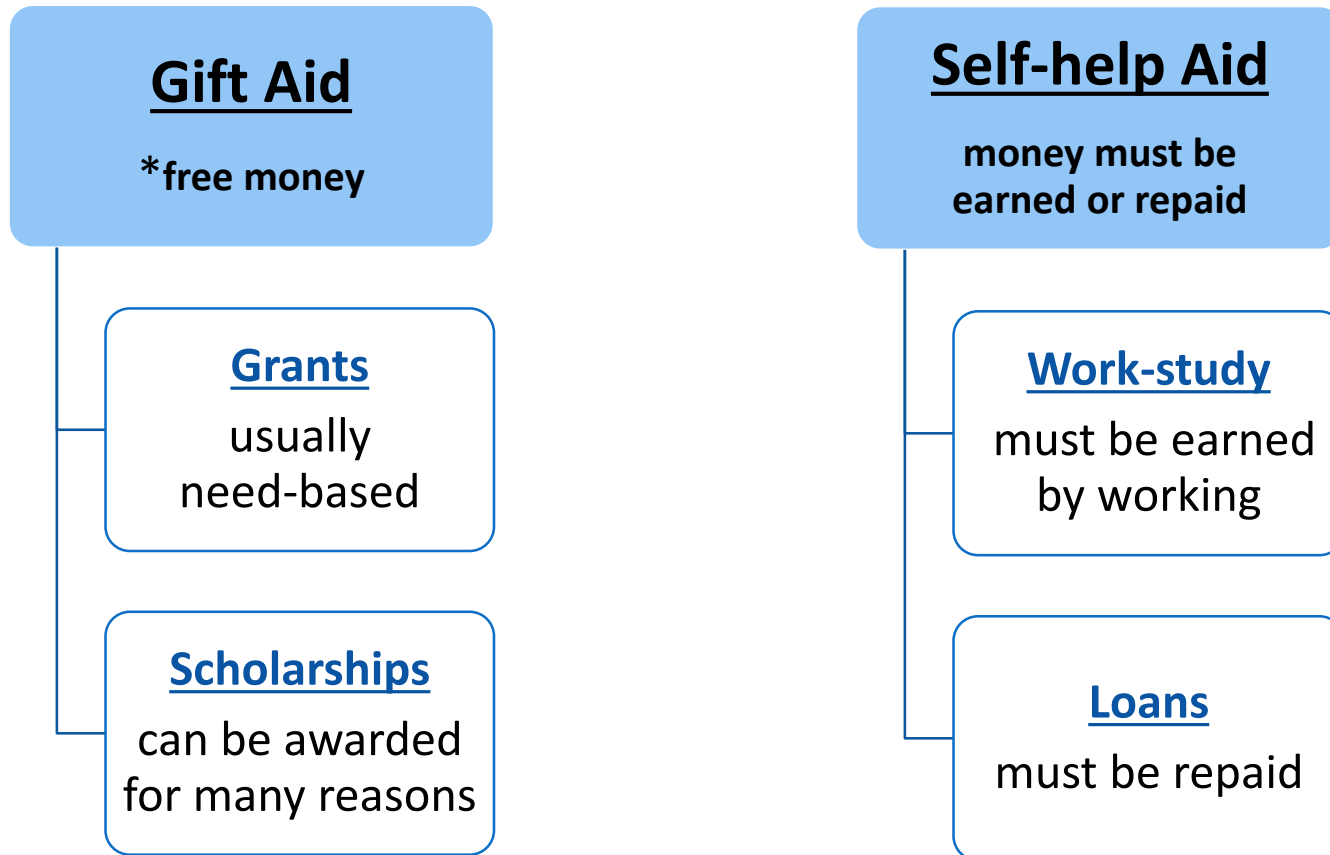
Cost of Attendance

A budget created by colleges to show the total cost for the school year

- **Direct expenses** must be paid directly to the institution
- **Indirect expenses** must be paid, but not always to the institution

Tuition & Fees	Direct
+ Living Expenses (Food & Housing)	Direct or indirect (e.g., dorm v. apartment)
+ Books, Course Materials, Supplies, and Equipment	Indirect
+ Transportation	
+ Miscellaneous Expenses	
= Cost of Attendance (COA)	

Types of Financial Aid



Financial Aid Sources

- Federal government → U.S. Department of Education (ED)
 - State government → ISAC
 - Colleges and universities → Your institution
 - Private sources → Anyone else that doesn't fit into one of the above
-
- **Tip #1:** to look for scholarships, think about what you buy, eat, wear
 - **Tip #2:** local scholarships = less competition (smaller applicant pool)
 - **Tip #3:** be careful with **scholarship scams** (don't pay for free money!)

Federal Gift Aid

Pell Grant

- Need-based
- Up to \$7,395

FSEOG

(Federal Supplemental
Educational Opportunity
Grant)

- Need-based & campus based
- Ranges from \$100 to \$4,000

Federal Self-Help Aid

Federal Work-Study

- Campus-based (only available at participating schools)
- Amounts are determined by the college

Federal Subsidized Loan

- Need-based
- Student is responsible for repaying
- Federal government pays interest while: in school, grace period, or authorized period of deferment

Federal Unsubsidized Loan

- Not need-based
- Student is responsible for repaying
- Student is always responsible for the interest

PLUS Loan

- Credit-based
- Parent (or graduate student) is responsible for repaying

Evaluate Your Loan Options

If you need to take out student loans, consider the following:

Source of the Loan

- Know where the money comes from
- Federal vs. private loans

Interest Rate

- Know your rate
- Is it variable? Fixed?

Repayment & Grace Period

- When are you required to start paying?
- What repayment options do you have?

Illinois Gift Aid

MAP Grant

(Monetary Award Program)

- Need-based
- Up to \$8,400 (only for tuition and fees)

IVG

(Illinois Veteran Grant)

- Tuition & fees

ING

(Illinois National Guard Grant)

- Tuition & fees

Grant for Dependents of Police, Fire, and Correctional Officers

- Tuition & fees

The Big Grants

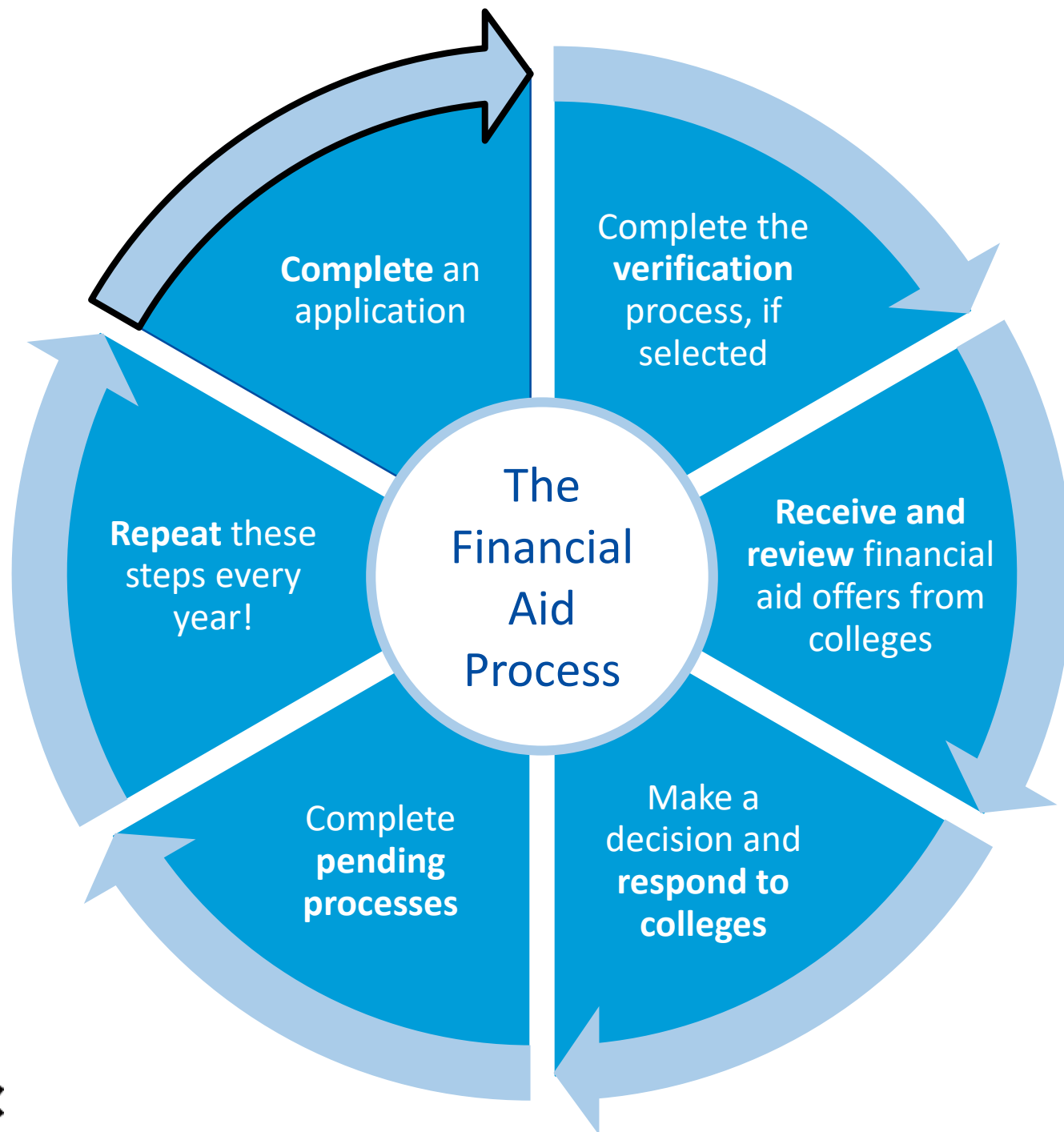
**Illinois
MAP Grant**
up to
\$8,400



**Federal
Pell Grant**
up to
\$7,395



**Total
Grant Aid**
up to
\$15,795



Step 1: Complete an Application

- **FAFSA** – the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*
 - The first step for most students – usually available October 1st
 - Used to apply for federal and Illinois financial aid
 - Free to file at www.fafsa.gov
- **Alternative App** – the *Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid*
 - For qualifying undocumented students – available same day as the FAFSA
 - Used to apply only for Illinois financial aid
 - Free to file at www.isac.org/alternativeapp
- **Other forms** - vary by college
 - Institutional forms
 - Other applications like the CSS Profile
 - Used to apply for institutional aid

Gather the Info You Need

- **FAFSA & Alternative Application**

- Federal tax returns, W-2s, and other records of income
- Banking statements and records of investments
- Records of untaxed income
- List of colleges student would like to attend

- **FAFSA Only**

- Student's Social Security Number (SSN), if parent doesn't have one it's okay
- Alien Registration Number, if students is not a U.S. Citizen
- Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID – students and parents must have their own

Note: neither application will ask about your parents' immigration status

Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID

- To submit a FAFSA, you will need an FSA ID
- The FSA ID is a username and password used to access FSA websites
- It serves as your electronic signature
- Students and parents need their own
- It's best to create an FSA ID a few days before starting your FAFSA
- Go to www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id to get started
- Parents without a Social Security Number can create one and use one of the following processes to verify their identity
 - Knowledge-based Identity Questions (TransUnion)
 - Manual Verification
 - Attestation & Validation of Identity Form
 - Supporting documentation

Parent Information

- Most students must report parent information until the age of 24, even if the student doesn't live with them
- For financial aid purposes, only parents listed below should provide info on the application

Parents

- Biological
- Adoptive
- Stepparent, if married to a biological or adoptive parent

Not Parents

- Legal guardians
- Foster parents
- Grandparents, siblings, aunts/uncles
- Friends or other relatives
- Other people, even if they claim student on their taxes

Which Parent Should Report Their Information?

- Are the student's biological/adoptive parents married to each other?
 - Yes → Both parents' information
 - No → Go to next question
- If unmarried, do the biological/adoptive parents live together?
 - Yes → Both parents' information
 - No → Go to the next question
- Did one parent provide most of the financial support for the student in the last 12 months?
 - Yes → That parent's information (and their spouse's, if remarried)
 - No → The parent with greater income & assets (and their spouse's, if remarried)

Sections of the FAFSA

- Student Section
 - Introduction: Personal Identifiers
 - Section 1: Personal Circumstances
 - Section 2: Demographics
 - Section 3: Financials
 - Section 4: Colleges
 - Section 5: Signature
- Parent Section
 - Introduction: Personal Identifiers
 - Section 1: Demographics
 - Section 2: Financials
 - Section 3: Signature

Sections of the Alternative App

- Section 1: Student demographics
- Section 2: Student income & assets
- Section 3: Dependency questions
- Section 4: Parents' demographic & financial information
- Section 5: Household information about independent students
- Section 6: School choices
- Section 7: Review/edit data, certify eligibility, and sign

Signing Your Application

- The FAFSA
 - Sign using an FSA ID
 - Students and parents need their own
 - Create it at www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id
- The Alternative App
 - A personal identification number (PIN) will be used to sign electronically
 - Students and parents need their own
 - The PIN will be generated and sent via email by ISAC

Student Aid Index

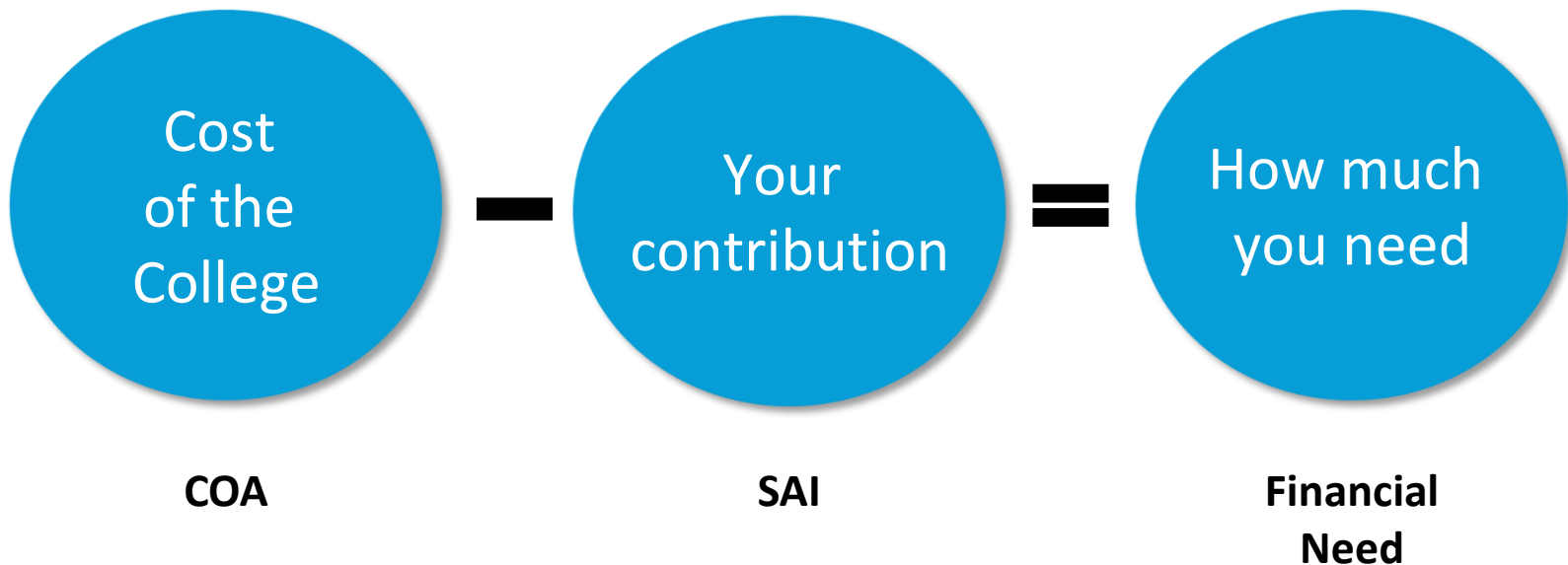
- The application will calculate your Student Aid Index (SAI)
 - If you file a FAFSA, you will see it on your confirmation page
 - If you file an Alternative App, you will not see it, you can ask your college
- This reflects what you can contribute towards your education
- It can be a negative number
- The SAI is used to determine eligibility for federal and IL financial aid
- Some colleges use it for institutional aid eligibility

Step 2: Verification (if selected)

- A process used by schools to confirm your application data is accurate
- Do not be alarmed! It's a common process.
- You may be asked to submit additional documentation.
- Provide only the information requested.
- Submit all documents on time.
- And keep copies of everything!

Step 3: Receive & Review Offers

- The formula below is used to determine your financial need
- Colleges will try to meet your financial need using all available aid
- All available aid will be packaged into a financial aid offer



Analyze Your Offers

- Review your offers to make an informed decision
- Things to consider in your financial aid offers
 - Deadlines for accepting/declining offers
 - Types of aid included (grants, scholarships, loans, etc.)
 - Offers with grants & scholarships (versus loans) tend to be more desirable
 - Pay attention to student loan types and interest rates
- Questions to Ask
 - Do you have to meet any conditions? (e.g., maintain a certain GPA)
 - Which ones are renewable? (i.e., can I get it more than one year?)
 - What will your out-of-pocket cost be? (remaining cost after all aid)

Compare Your Options

- Compare the offers before making a decision
- Financial aid offers will include Other Financial Assistance (OFA) from all available sources

	COA	SAI	OFA	Remaining Need
College A	\$13,357	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,357
College B	\$27,391	\$3,000	\$20,000	\$4,391
College C	\$39,573	\$3,000	\$35,000	\$1,573

Step 4: Decide & Respond

- Once you make a decision, respond to all colleges
- Accept the offer from the college you will attend
 - This lets them know you plan to attend
 - Serves as confirmation you will receive the aid they offered
- Decline offers from the colleges you will not attend
 - Lets them know you will not attend
 - Frees up the financial aid to give to another student

Step 5: Complete Pending Processes

- Submit all required forms
- Confirm you will attend (intent to enroll)
- Accept your financial aid offer
- Pay enrollment & housing deposits – or ask for waivers, if needed
- Check your college email/student account to see pending tasks

Step 6:

Repeat the Process Every Year

- Applying for financial aid is not a one-time process
- You must file a FAFSA or Alternative App every year you attend college
- Circumstances can change from year to year, it is important to reapply
 - E.g., loss of income, new family member, marriage, divorce, etc.
 - These things can all affect your eligibility

Tips & Reminders

Apply as soon as applications become available
(usually October 1st)

The FAFSA & Alternative App are **free** to complete
do not pay anyone!

Keep track of **deadlines!** Missing one can delay your
financial aid

It's never too early to apply for **scholarships!**

Reapply every year you will be in college!

ISAC Student Portal

ISAC
Student Portal

**COLLEGE PLANNING
MADE EASY.**

isac.org/studentportal

NOW PLAYING

ISAC COLLEGE MINUTE

COLLEGE PLANNING AND FINANCIAL AID VIDEOS

Get quick tips and answers to college planning and financial aid questions. Check out ISAC College Minute videos and more at www.isac.org/nowplaying

“Do I have to provide my parents’ information on my financial aid application?”

¿Cómo solicito la subvención MAP de Illinois?

PAUL OLIVER
Student in Residence
Illinois National Guard & Army Reserve

APPLY FOR ISAC GRANT/ SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

APPLY NOW

Create a student profile on the Portal to apply for some of ISAC’s specialized grant and scholarship programs:

- Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship
- Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program
- Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)
- Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant

You can also use the Portal to check your MAP Paid Credit Hours.

ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

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Trusted Websites

Stay up-to-date and learn more using these free, trusted sources of information




studentportal.isac.org



studentaid.gov



fafsa.gov



isac.org/alternativeapp

First Gen Scholars Network (FGSN)

- Join ISAC's **First Gen Scholars Network!**
- Click **JOIN NOW!** on the Student Portal
- The FGSN allows you to:
 - Connect with other first gen students
 - Find a first gen program on your campus
 - Join events specifically designed for first gen students
 - Receive important updates
 - Text your questions to ISAC
 - Services are **free!**

Join the Network
Ready to join?
You can join using our online form

JOIN NOW!

Have questions? Email us at
ISAC.FirstGen@illinois.gov



Get on Our Communication List!

- Get latest news and important updates
 - FAFSA
 - Alternative App
 - ISAC scholarships and grants
- Get notified when financial aid applications are available
- Use your personalized student StriveScan QR code to sign up or via the FGSN page
- Get a StriveScan QR code at StriveVisit.com



Thank You!

- Remember, you can get free help to complete an application!
- Contact me, or find an ISACorps member near you:
studentportal.isac.org/isacorps

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