



Heartland Community College

2026-2027

Terms and Conditions of Financial Aid Awards

**Heartland Community College
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It is very important that you review this information carefully.

This document explains the terms and conditions of your Financial Aid Award as well as your rights and responsibilities as an aid recipient. You are responsible for understanding the terms and conditions stipulated. This information is the most accurate available at the time of publication. It is subject to change at any time without notice due to the nature of federal, state and institutional guidelines affecting aid.

Be aware that any intentionally false statements or misrepresentations you make (written or verbal) in any phase of the financial aid process may eliminate you from future consideration for any assistance from Heartland Community College, and may subject you to a fine, imprisonment, or both.

ALL FUNDS ARE SUBJECT TO REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION AT ANY TIME

DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR. In the unlikely event that a change in your financial aid awards is necessary, we will notify you at the earliest possible date.

Confidentiality

Heartland Community College complies with federal and state privacy laws and regulations. The data in your financial aid file may only be released to authorized representatives of federal and state agencies, involved lenders, and university agents needing the information for awarding and advising. No one else may review your file without your written consent, a subpoena or a court order. If you want to release information to someone else, such as a parent or spouse, a scholarship donor or an outside rental agency, etc., you must provide written authorization. Release of Information forms are available in the Heartland Community College Financial Aid Office.

General Conditions

The types of financial aid available come from a variety of sources. Generally, financial aid comes from the federal government, the State of Illinois, Heartland Community College, and private donors. Each aid program has specific eligibility requirements. You must meet the following requirements to receive financial assistance through the aid programs administered.

You must:

- demonstrate financial need as determined by the financial aid office,
- be a citizen or a permanent resident of the United States,
- have a high school diploma from an eligible secondary institution as defined by the U. S. Department of Education, a General Educational Development (GED) certificate or completed high school through a home school program,
- be admitted to Heartland Community College in an eligible program leading to an approved degree or certificate,

- maintain satisfactory academic progress standards as defined by Heartland Community College,
- be enrolled at least half-time (six credit hours) for all programs except Federal Pell Grant and ISAC MAP,
- not be in default on any educational loan, show an unwillingness to repay an educational loan, or owe any refund on a grant or loan,
- meet the eligibility requirements of each of the aid programs accepted,
- be registered with the Selective Service if you are a male student who is at least 18 years of age,
- not receive financial aid at more than one school for the same period of time.

Further, you may not transfer financial aid offered by Heartland Community College to any other school and aid offered by any other school cannot be transferred to Heartland Community College.

1. **Enrollment:** All federal and state financial aid awards, unless noted otherwise, are based on 15 credit hours per term. If you are ***not*** enrolled in 15 credit hours or more each term, federal and state grant aid and student loans will be reduced to reflect actual enrollment verified at the time of disbursement.
2. **Disbursement of Awards:** Federal and state grants, scholarships, and student loans are usually divided equally between the fall and spring semester. Financial aid funds are used first to pay any outstanding tuition, fee and bookstore charges. If funds remain after all institutional charges are paid, a refund will be issued to you based on your selected refund preference through BankMobile (deposit to an existing account or a deposit to a BankMobileVibe Checking account) Grants are applied to your Heartland student account after the term census date and are adjusted to reflect the number of credit hours in which students are enrolled. The dollar amounts listed on your award letter is based on full-time enrollment. The amount of aid disbursed to your student account is based on your actual credit hour enrollment. Classes must have met a minimum of three to four weeks before they will be counted in your credit hour enrollment. With the exception of Federal Work-Study, federal and state grant funds processed by the financial aid office will be automatically disbursed to your student account. The business office will deduct incurred costs (tuition, fees, and other authorized charges such as books and supplies) from the financial aid that is credited to your account. Any remaining financial aid is refunded to the student within 14 days of disbursement to student accounts. Anticipated grant refund dates are posted on the institutions website under financial aid refunds. Grant and scholarship funds awarded by private/outside donors are not applied to your account until the money is received by Heartland Community College.
3. Student loan funds are applied to student account after the **40% point** of the semester. Students must complete all student loan requirements each academic year (i.e. entrance loan counseling, completion of master promissory note and Borrower Information Sheet, etc.) before a loan disbursement is made. The business office will deduct incurred costs (tuition, fees, and other authorized charges such as books and supplies) from the financial aid that is credited to your account. Any remaining financial aid is refunded to the student within 14 days of disbursement to student accounts.

4. **Satisfactory Academic Progress:** Students are responsible for meeting satisfactory academic progress standards for financial aid as outlined in the Heartland Community College Catalog and Student Handbook. Students who fail to meet the standards, which are required by the U.S. Department of Education, will be notified and will be ineligible to receive financial aid funding in future semesters. Students should review the institutions SAP policies for financial aid issued with award letters. A copy of the policy can be obtained on the financial aid webpage under forms and policies.
5. **Repeat Credit Hours:** Financial aid will cover the cost of tuition for repeating a course if a failing grade has been received for all previous attempts of the course. In cases where a minimum passing grade is required, financial aid will cover the cost of tuition and fees for multiple repeats of the course if the minimum required passing grade has not previously been achieved. **NOTE:** Each time the course is taken it is considered hours attempted for purposes of calculating compliance with Satisfactory Academic Progress.
6. **Developmental Courses:** Financial aid will cover the cost of tuition and fees for a maximum of 30 hours of developmental course work. Developmental is defined as any sub-100 level course. **NOTE:** developmental courses are considered hours attempted for purposes of calculating compliance with Satisfactory Academic Progress.
7. **Over awards:** For students receiving any federal and/or state financial aid, the total financial aid received from all sources (federal, state, institutional and private) cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance. In the event a student receives aid in excess of the cost of attendance, financial aid will be reduced in the following order: student loans, student employment and then gift aid (scholarships and grants).
8. **Withdrawals:** Students who withdraw from all courses or stop attending courses prior to the 60% point in the semester may be required to repay a portion of financial aid funds received, or may have financial aid funds cancelled.

a. Federal Financial Aid (Title IV) Return of Funds Policy

i. Earning Financial Aid

Federal regulations state that financial aid is earned by attending class. You have not earned 100% of your financial aid until you have attended 60% of the term. If you withdraw before this date, a portion of your financial aid has not been earned. The unearned portion is equal to the percentage of the term remaining on the date of withdrawal. Your financial aid eligibility will be recalculated based on your actual period of attendance - you may be asked to repay a portion of the aid that had been disbursed to you.

ii. Determining Last Date of Attendance

Your last date of attendance is determined in one of two ways. If you officially withdraw from the institution, your last date of attendance is date you began the withdrawal process or notified the institution of your withdrawal. An unofficial withdrawal occurs when you stop attending classes, but do not notify the institution of your withdrawal. At the mid-point of each semester, the institution checks for non-attendance. In cases where a student is failing classes at the mid-point of the semester, each

instructor will confirm whether the student is still attending class or will provide the last date of attendance for each class. If you have ceased to attend all classes, the latest date of attendance in all classes will be used to determine the withdrawal date.

iii. **Repaying of Financial Aid**

Once the institution has determined you have either officially or unofficially withdrawn from the institution, we will notify you (the student) within 30 days if you are required to repay a portion of your financial aid for the term. Heartland Community College returns funds within 45 days to the U.S. Department of Education. In recalculating your financial aid eligibility, we will reduce your financial aid in the following order:

1. Unsubsidized Direct Stafford loan
2. Subsidized Direct Stafford loan
3. Direct PLUS loan
4. Federal Pell Grant
5. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
6. Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

Your Responsibilities and Rights

You have the responsibility to:

1. Apply for financial aid annually, prior to January 1 proceeding the fall semester you will be attending.
2. Check your Heartland email regularly as the Financial Aid Office only communicates with students via Heartland email and through self service.
3. Read, understand, and retain copies of all information and/or forms that are emailed/sent to you or that you must sign.
4. Submit all forms required to complete the application process.
5. Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

You have the right to:

1. Be advised of what financial aid programs are available and how to apply for them.
2. Be advised of requirements in the case of withdrawal, refunds, and repayment of financial aid.
3. Have all financial aid application information treated with the highest professional confidentiality.
4. Be advised of the procedures and deadlines for submitting applications(s) for financial aid.
5. Be advised of how and when financial aid funds are disbursed.
6. Request a review of your financial aid package if family and/or financial circumstances have changed.

Special Circumstances: It is assumed that family income and circumstances remain the same from year to year. If you or your parent(s) (if dependent) have a decrease in income from what

was reported on the FAFSA because of unemployment, loss of untaxed income, separation or divorce, disability or death, please contact the Heartland Community College Financial Aid Office. You may be eligible to have your financial aid reviewed using projected calendar year income rather than past year income information. Contact Financial Aid Office to obtain form for reevaluation.

Financial Aid Consortium Agreement with Illinois State University: Heartland Community College and Illinois State University have entered into a consortium agreement to maximize financial aid eligibility for students concurrently enrolled at both institutions. Under the agreement, the hours of enrollment at each institution can be combined for financial aid purposes. To be eligible, a student must be enrolled for at least 6 credit hours at Illinois State University (ISU) and a minimum of 3 credit hours at Heartland Community College (HCC). The ISU hours must be greater than or equal to the HCC hours. The HCC hours must be transferable to ISU and count toward the student's major course of study. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Financial Aid Office at Illinois State University prior to the enrollment period to complete the appropriate Consortium Contract paperwork. Under the consortium agreement, all financial aid will be processed and disbursed through ISU. It is the student's responsibility to make payment arrangements for classes taken at HCC.

Types of Financial Aid

Federal Pell Grant is funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Education. To qualify for the Federal Pell Grant, students must demonstrate significant financial need. Awards range from \$740 to \$7395 per academic year. After the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is evaluated by the Financial Aid Office, the U.S. Department of Education determines a student's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant. The amount of Federal Pell Grant funds a student may receive over his or her lifetime is limited by federal law to the equivalent of twelve full-time semesters (6 years).

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. To qualify for the FSEOG, students must meet specific criteria outlined by the Financial Aid Office. Students who are awarded FSEOG must be enrolled for at least 6 credit hours per semester in order to receive the award. FSEOG awards vary in amount, but generally are \$250-\$1000 per year. A limited amount of FSEOG funding is available.

Federal Work Study (FWS) awards allow an opportunity to work on campus or at specific off-campus non-profit agencies. Students who demonstrate financial need and who are hired under the FWS program will receive a paycheck every two weeks for hours worked. Available jobs under the FWS program are advertised through the Career Center's Handshake App. Students must be enrolled for at least 6 credit hours per semester and maintain greater than a 2.0 cumulative grade point average in order to work under the FWS program. A limited amount of FWS funding is available.

William D. Ford Federal Direct Stafford Loans are funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Direct loans are funds that must be repaid with interest. Your lender is the U.S. Department of Education and the loan is repaid to the federal government. All students borrowing under the direct loan program must submit the FAFSA. There are two types of Federal Direct Loans – a subsidized loan and an unsubsidized loan. Students must demonstrate

financial need in order to receive a subsidized loan. The federal government will pay the interest on a subsidized loan while the student is enrolled in college at least half time (6 credit hours). An unsubsidized loan is not based on financial need. The student is responsible for paying the interest on an unsubsidized loan from the time the loan is disbursed.

Because both Subsidized and Unsubsidized loans **MUST** be repaid (with interest) to the U.S. government, students will be required to sign a legally binding contract (promissory note) promising to repay the loan. Students should think very carefully before borrowing under these loan programs because there are serious consequences to not repaying student loans.

Under the Direct Loan program, students may generally borrow up to \$5500 as a freshman and up to \$6500 as a sophomore per academic year. Under certain circumstances independent students may be eligible to borrow up to an additional \$4000. Interest rate for Direct Loans on or After July 1, 2026 and before July 1, 2027 are 6.52%. An origination fee in the amount of 1.057% is deducted from the loan amount prior to disbursement. This fee goes directly to the federal government to help offset the cost of processing the loan.

William D. Ford Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) is available to parents of dependent undergraduate students who are enrolled at least half time (six credit hours). The loan is not based on need and the borrower is the parent, **not** the student. The interest rate on the loan is fixed at 9.07% as of July 1, 2026. Eligibility is based on credit approval. Parents may borrow up to the amount of educational expenses minus any financial aid received by the student. A fee of 4.228% is deducted from the loan amount. This fee goes directly to the federal government to help offset the cost of processing the loan. Repayment begins within 60 days of the funds being fully disbursed.

Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant is awarded to eligible Illinois residents who demonstrate financial need. Students are automatically considered for a MAP grant by submitting the FAFSA. MAP grant awards can only be used to pay tuition and mandatory fees and vary in amounts from \$300 - \$4500 per academic year. Funding for MAP grants is limited and eligibility for the award is determined by ISAC and the date of the FAFSA submission. In past years, the cutoff date for consideration for a full year MAP grant has been as early as mid-January. It is to your advantage to complete the FAFSA as early as possible. The FAFSA application is available beginning October 1. Students can receive up to a maximum of 135 paid MAP credit hours.

Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG) is awarded to eligible students who entered the military from the state of Illinois, served at least one year of honorable active duty and returned to Illinois within six months of separation. IVG pays tuition and certain fees and is not based on financial need; however, students need to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined in the Heartland Community College Course Catalog. Applications are available online through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission or from the Financial Aid Office.

Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant is awarded to members of the Illinois National Guard or Illinois Naval Militia who served at least one year and are concurrently in the Guard or Militia. The grant pays tuition and certain fees and is not based on financial need; however, students need to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined in the Heartland Community College Course Catalog. Applications are available from the Financial Aid Office or online

through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission and must be submitted for each year of enrollment. [Default Prevention and Management Plan](#)

Federal Financial Aid for Veterans: The Financial Aid Office will provide assistance and enrollment certification for veterans who wish to use their federal benefits at Heartland Community College. Applicants must complete VA forms and submit proof of their military service record and official transcripts for all previous college coursework. Certain veterans programs require additional verification of information.

Heartland Community College Foundation Scholarships are achievement and/or leadership competitive-based awards for students who complete the Foundation Scholarship Application Form, meet the specific criteria of the scholarship and are selected as recipients. Generally, the deadline for applying is March 1. Applications for all Foundation scholarships are submitted through the Heartland student center <http://home.heartland.edu/>.

Tax Considerations

The College is required to send information to you and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by January 31st about your tuition charges and grants and scholarships received on a Form 1098T. It is your responsibility to use this information when filling out your income tax return. IRS Publication 970, *Tax Benefits for Education*, provides information about the taxability of scholarships and grants you may have received, as well as tax benefits for which you might be eligible. If you need further assistance, contact the local IRS office or a tax advisor. The college cannot provide income tax advice. Below is a breakdown of some of the tax benefits:

TAX CREDITS:

American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC)

Lifetime Learning Tax Credit

TAX DEDUCTIONS:

Above-the-line deduction for tuition and fees

Work-related education deduction

TAX EXCLUSIONS:

For scholarship and fellowship income

Tuition reductions

Employer-provided education benefits

TAX INCENTIVES FOR PREFERENTIAL TAX TREATMENT OF STUDENT LOAN EXPENSES:

Student loan interest deduction

Exclusion for student loans that have been forgiven

TAX INCENTIVES FOR SAVING FOR COLLEGE:

Qualified Tuition Plans (QTPs) or 529 plans (for Prepaid and Savings Plans)

Coverdell Education Savings Accounts

Education savings bond program

Withdrawals from individual retirement accounts (IRAs)

The allowance of uniform transfers to minors