



Treasurer's Note

## Why Saving for College is Important in a Pandemic

COVID-19 continues to challenge us, especially children and parents as they determine how school and learning works best for them.

For too many families, however, uncertainty about the school year is not the only challenge. This pandemic's economic fallout is felt hardest by those with only a high school education or less. Workers with a college degree have fared better economically because many jobs requiring a college education can be done remotely. As workplace changes and disruptions continue, we likely will see more high school students pursuing a higher education and more adults seeking retraining at a community college or university.

We have seen this before. During the 2008 financial crisis, job losses largely were borne by workers without a college education. As a result, high unemployment led to a surge in college enrollment. Today, we should expect succeeding in college to be even more important.

That is why our work to help families save money so their children can pursue higher education is imperative. Despite current uncertainties, educational attainment will remain a key predictor of economic mobility, especially higher pay, better health, and more security.

I understand it is difficult for many of us to continue – or even increase - contributions to a 529 college savings plan. However, [Bright Start](#) and [Bright Directions](#) offer flexible options for parents, family, and friends to contribute to a child's account. We must not let these uncertain times overwhelm our long-term goals. A child who knows they have a college savings fund is three times more likely to attend college.

That is a dream worth achieving.

Sincerely,  
**Michael W. Frerichs**  
Illinois State Treasurer



COVID-19

## The Coin Shortage is Real

Yes, the coin shortage is real.

Just as COVID-19 inspired purchases that caused a shortage of toilet paper, face masks and hand sanitizer, now it is causing a shortage of spare change.

Fewer people are shopping, and when they do, they are more likely to use a credit or debit card.

With fewer people using cash, there are fewer people offering coins. The shortage disproportionately hurts those who do not have a bank account or access to credit.

Earlier this summer, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell told federal lawmakers that [coin deposits from banks to the Federal Reserve system have declined significantly](#). As a result, the Federal Reserve began rationing coins.

To accommodate the shortage, some merchants are asking cash customers to use exact change. Others are offering incentives, such as a free drink to customers who trade \$5 in change for \$5 in bills.

If you can, see what spare change you might have and put it to good use – giving a merchant exact change or making a deposit with your bank or credit union.



Charitable Trust

## Help is Available to Non-Profits

The Charitable Trust grant program seeks to help small non-profits with annual budgets of \$1 million or less that provide food and housing assistance. Non-profits serving those impacted by COVID-19 are encouraged to apply. [Applications will be accepted through Sept. 30.](#)

Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs' office manages the program. More than \$2.2 million has been awarded to 100 non-profit organizations since the grant program was established in 2017. Money comes from filing fees non-profits pay when incorporating in the state of Illinois, not personal or property tax dollars.

For this grant cycle, \$375,000 is available to be split between 30 non-profits. Each organization can receive up to \$12,500. Previous grant recipients are eligible if the term of their grant has been complete for at least one calendar year. An independent 11-member board that oversees the fund's management will select the winners.

For more information, or to apply, click [here](#). Inquiries also can be directed to (217) 836-4590.





Michael W. Frerichs  
ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER



## Treasurer Frerichs Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

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### Did You Know?

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office. Today, the investment approach is cautious to ensure the preservation of capital. The office returns \$42 to the state for every \$1 it spends in operations.