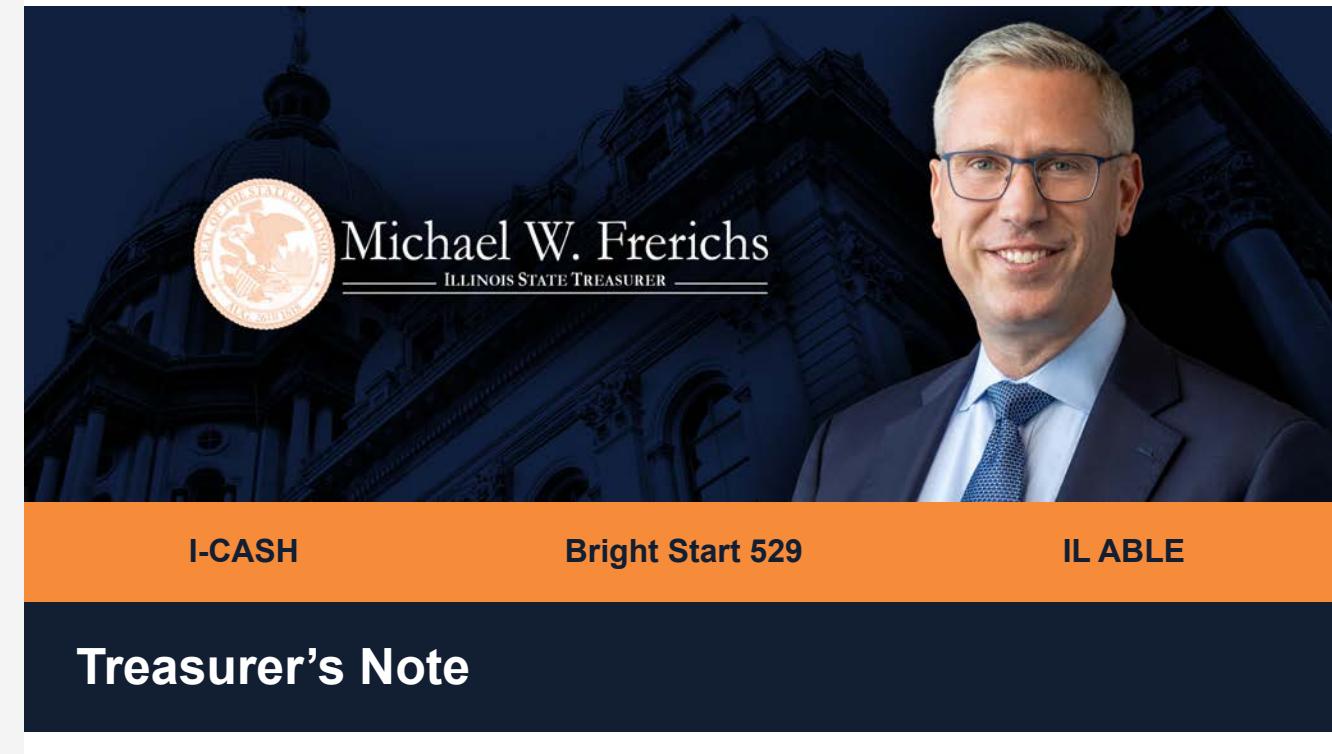


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I-CASH Bright Start 529 IL ABLE

**Treasurer's Note**

April 29, 2025

**Taking Care of Those Left Behind**

Firefighters put their lives on the line every time they are called upon for help.

There is no such thing as a routine call when fire is involved. Last week was a tragic reminder of the dangers firefighters face.

Captain David Meyer died fighting a fire when a garage roof collapsed. Authorities say the fire was suspicious, and a man is charged with Meyer's murder as well as aggravated arson after setting the fire in a trash can.

Captain Meyer, 54, spent nearly 30 years in the Chicago Fire Department. He was described as "the rock" of his family. This week, that family is gathering for funeral services, and we join firefighters throughout Illinois in mourning this great loss.

Chicago Fire Commissioner Annette Nance-Holt talked about the reality firefighters face.

"Please keep us all in your prayers," she said. "It's one of those things (where) we go to work every day and, you know, we never know if we're going to come home."

That is one of the reasons we offer [Fallen Heroes](#) scholarships. Men and women who serve our country in the military, or our communities as police officers, firefighters, and paramedics sacrifice and risk a lot. For those who don't make it home from work, we offer a \$5,000 Bright Start scholarship for their surviving children.



*My grandpa served as a firefighter and fire chief of the Gifford Volunteer Fire Department, which he helped start. He is standing at the far right with colleagues at the scene of a fire.*

As a child, I wanted to be a firefighter. My grandfather [helped start](#) the Gifford Volunteer Fire Department and served as a firefighter and fire chief for years. I was proud to serve as a volunteer firefighter in Gifford along with many members of my family over the years.

If you know someone who would qualify for one of these Fallen Heroes scholarships, please reach out to them, or [let us know](#). We would like to do this for these heroes and are putting a spotlight on the program ahead of [International Firefighters' Day](#) on May 4.

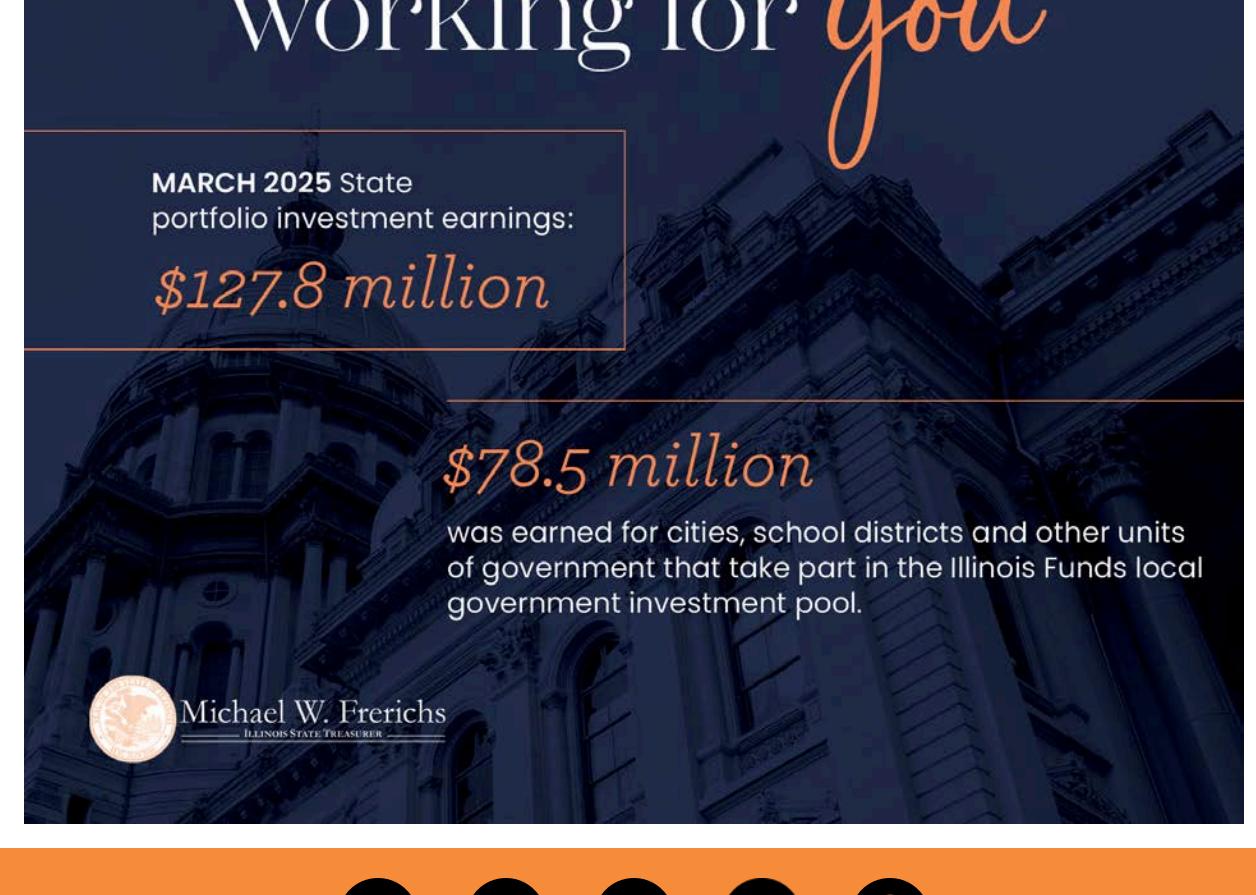
Sincerely,  
Michael

**Helping Illinois Students with College Affordability**

Illinois students and their families now have a new option to borrow money for in-state higher education expenses. Treasurer Michael Frerichs unveiled the new program last week during a press conference where he pointed out, "Financial aid often doesn't cover all of the costs, and we are offering a solution to help students bridge the gap."

The new Funding U [Illinois No-Cosigner Loan](#) is part of the [Student Empowerment Fund](#), Treasurer Frerichs' plan to provide private college loans for Illinois residents at lower rates than private competitors and help bridge the gap with federal financial aid. The Student Empowerment Fund also includes ISL Education Lending's Illinois Partnership Loan and Illinois College Family Loan options.

Find out more by watching the video above!

[Contact Us](#)

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