



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs' Plan to Allow Leftover College Savings Funds to Be Used For Retirement Signed Into Law

Frerichs Thanks Governor, Lawmakers for Bipartisan Approval

Parents who don't use all the money in their Illinois 529 College Savings Accounts (Bright Start and Bright Directions) are now able to roll over the funds into a Roth IRA under Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs' [plan](#) that was [signed into law](#).

"This will give parents another option when deciding what to do with the money they've saved for their children if they don't use all of it," said Treasurer Frerichs, who thanked Gov. JB Pritzker for signing the legislation and State Sen. Steve Stadelman and State Rep. Diane Blair-Sherlock for sponsoring it. "A common question we get from parents is what they can do with their Illinois 529 money if their child doesn't go to college or gets a scholarship, and there is money left over in the account, and we have good news to share with them."

The option is possible because Congress approved a measure in December 2022 changing Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code to authorize tax- and penalty-free rollovers from college savings plans to Roth IRAs, with some limitations. The measure took effect on January 1, 2024.

To take effect in Illinois, however, lawmakers needed to change state law to allow the Roth IRA rollover option for [Bright Start](#) and [Bright Directions](#) 529 college savings account owners.

"We are pleased to be able to tell families who are responsibly saving for their children's future education that any unused funds can now be used to help start saving for their child's retirement without penalty," said Blair-Sherlock of Villa Park.

"We worked together to approve this common-sense change that will help families who open college savings accounts for their children," said Stadelman, whose district includes Rockford.

State law already allows parents to leave leftover money in a Bright Start account for future use by another family member going to college or roll over the money into an Illinois ABLE account. The money also can be taken out as a nonqualified withdrawal, but there are tax implications, and people are encouraged to consult a tax professional.

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The federal law set some limitations on college savings rollovers, including a \$35,000 lifetime limit on transfers, which also are subject to annual Roth IRA contribution limits (this year they are \$7,000 for people under 50). In addition, rollovers must be made to the college savings account beneficiary and not the owner. And rollovers only can be made from 529 accounts that have been active for 15 years and no contributions or investment earnings in the last five years are eligible for rollover.

About the Illinois Treasurer

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office is a powerful economic engine that invests in people to drive prosperity, development and growth throughout the state. As State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'iks) is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$60 billion. The investments help families pay for college and trade school; workers save for a dignified retirement; and local governments process bill payments more efficiently so they can pass along the savings to taxpayers. The office provides financial institutions money to loan to farmers, small business owners, and qualified individuals at below-market rates because better jobs create stronger communities. The office operates the state's largest consumer-protection initiative, the unclaimed property I-Cash program, which has returned a record-breaking \$2 billion since Frerichs was elected. For more news about the State Treasurer's Office, please follow Treasurer Frerichs on Instagram at [ILTreasurer](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Facebook at [Invested in You – Treasurer Michael Frerichs](#). You can find our weekly newsletter [here](#).

About the Illinois 529 College Savings Programs

The Bright Start Direct-Sold College Savings Program ("Bright Start") and the Bright Directions Advisor-Guided 529 College Savings Program ("Bright Directions") are part of the Illinois College Savings Pool and are designed to qualify as qualified tuition programs under the provisions of Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code. Bright Start and Bright Directions are sponsored by the State of Illinois and administered by the Illinois State Treasurer, as Trustee. Union Bank & Trust Company serves as Program Manager, and Northern Trust Securities, Inc. acts as Distributor of the advisor-sold plan. Balances in your Bright Start account are not guaranteed or insured by Bright Start, the State of Illinois, the Illinois State Treasurer, any other state or federal agency, Union Bank and Trust Company or any of its affiliates, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (except as provided in the Program Disclosure Statement solely with respect to the FDIC-insured Bank Savings Underlying Investment), or any other entity.

An investor should consider the investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses associated with municipal fund securities before investing. This and other important information is contained in the fund prospectuses and the Bright Start Program Disclosure Statement and Bright Directions Program Disclosure Statement (issuer's official statement), which can be obtained from your financial professional, on [BrightStart.com](#), and [BrightDirections.com](#) and should be read carefully before investing. You can lose money by investing in a portfolio. Each of the portfolios involves investment risks, which are described in the Program Disclosure Statement.

An investor should consider, before investing, whether the investor's or designated beneficiary's home state offers any state tax or other benefits such as financial aid, scholarship funds, and protection from creditors that are only available for investments in such state's 529 plan. Investors should consult a tax advisor.

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