



Tuition Benefits for Immigrants

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Sixteen states and the District of Columbia offer in-state tuition to unauthorized immigrant students by state legislative action and five states by state university systems. Sixteen state legislatures—California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington—and the District of Columbia—enacted laws to allow in-state tuition benefits for certain unauthorized immigrant students.

These laws typically require attendance and graduation at state high schools, acceptance at a state college or university, and promising to apply for legal status as soon as eligible. At least five state university systems—the University of Hawaii Board of Regents, University of Maine Board of Trustees, University of Michigan Board of Regents, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and Rhode Island’s Board of Governors for Higher Education—established policies to offer in-state tuition rates to unauthorized immigrant students.

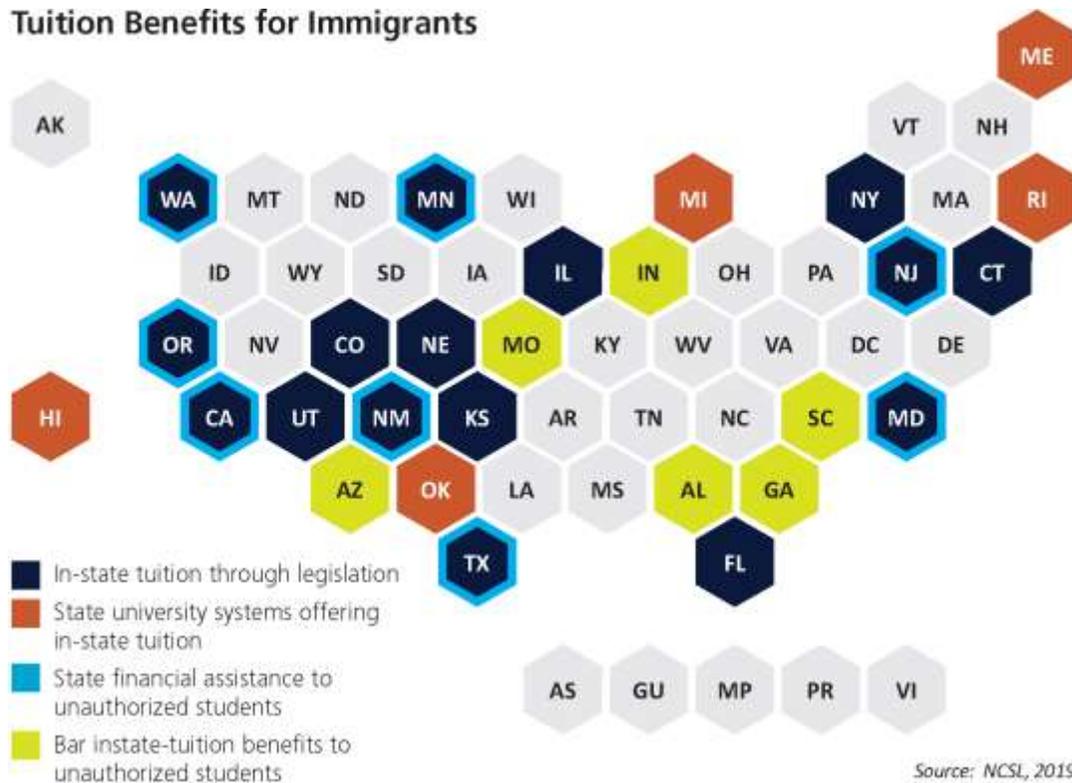
Delaware has considered but not enacted legislation, but Delaware Technical Community College and the University of Delaware allow undocumented students to be eligible for in-state tuition and financial aid.

In 2018, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington enacted laws allowing certain immigrant students, such as students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), to be eligible for financial aid.

At least nine states—California, Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington—offer state financial assistance to certain undocumented immigrant students including DACA students. Several states, including Utah, allow public universities to use private sources of funding to support financial aid to unauthorized immigrant students.

Six states—Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri and South Carolina—bar unauthorized immigrant students from in-state tuition benefits.

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State	Bill	Year	Summary
STATES OFFERING IN-STATE TUITION THROUGH STATE LEGISLATION			
California	A 540	2001	This law requires that an unlawful immigrant, other than a nonimmigrant alien, be exempted from paying nonresident tuition at state community colleges and the state university if these conditions are met: attendance at a state high school for three or more years, graduation from a California high school or the equivalent, registration at or attendance at an accredited higher education institution in the state, and has filed an affidavit stating that the student has applied to legalize his or her immigration status, or will file an application as soon as he or she is eligible.
	S 68	2017	This law expands eligibility created in AB 540 (2001) for in-state tuition for students at California's public postsecondary institutions, other than nonimmigrant aliens, to students who have completed three or more years of attendance at an elementary school, secondary school, adult school and/or California Community College.
	A 343	2017	This law exempts students granted special immigrant visas or are refugees from paying nonresident tuition at the California State University and the California Community Colleges.
Colorado	S 33	2013	This law allows students without lawful immigration status to be considered in-state residents and exempts people receiving higher education benefits from having to provide documentation of lawful presence in the United States.
Connecticut	H 6390	2011	This law extends in-state tuition benefits to postsecondary students without legal immigration status who reside in Connecticut and meet certain criteria. It requires them to file an affidavit with a college stating that they have applied to legalize their immigration status or will do so as soon as they are eligible to apply.
	H 6844	2015	Amends existing law related to requirements for residents, other than certain nonimmigrant aliens, to be classified as an in-state for tuition purposes. Students must have completed at least two years of high school in the state, rather than the previous four-year requirement.
	S 4	2018	This law allows any person age 30 or younger on June 15, 2012, or age 16 or younger upon arrival in the United States, has continuously resided in the United States since such arrival, and has not been convicted of a felony in any state, to be eligible to receive in-state tuition.

Florida	H 851	2014	This postsecondary education law includes amendments relating to qualifications for resident (in-state) tuition. Out-of-state fees are waived for students, including but not limited to, those undocumented for federal immigration purposes who have attended a secondary school for three years before graduating from a Florida high school, applied for higher education enrollment within two years of graduation, and submitted an official Florida high school transcript as evidence of attendance and graduation. Dependent children who are U.S. citizens may not be denied classification as a resident for tuition purposes based solely upon the immigration status of their parent. The law prohibits denial of classification as a resident for tuition purposes based on immigration status and allows certain people to be classified as state residents based on marriage or military service.
Illinois	H 60	2003	This law allows in-state tuition for a person who is not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States who files an affidavit stating intent to apply for citizenship as soon as is possible.
Kansas	H 2145	2004	This law allows certain nonresidents to be deemed to be residents for purposes of tuition and other fees at postsecondary educational institutions and makes provisions for people without lawful immigration status under certain circumstances.
Maryland	S 167	2011	This law authorizes in-state tuition benefits at a local community college to unauthorized students who have graduated from public high schools. Parents must be able to prove they pay Maryland taxes to receive in-state tuition. After two years, students have the option of transferring to a state university at in-state tuition rates. Students who are not permanent residents must provide to the public college an affidavit stating that they will file an application to become a permanent resident within 30 days after becoming eligible to do so.
Minnesota	S 1236	2013	This law establishes criteria by which students without lawful immigration status may qualify for the resident tuition rate in state universities and colleges. It also provides for the treatment of undocumented immigrants with respect to financial aid and tuition and public institutions may also use private sources of funding to provide aid to a student eligible for resident tuition.
Nebraska	L 239	2006	This law redefines “residency” and “lawful status” for the sake of in-state tuition eligibility and allows those residing in the state for three years or more, and who meet other criteria, to become eligible for in-state tuition.
New Jersey	S 2479	2013	This law provides in-state tuition and state financial aid if the individual attended high school for three years, graduated or received the equivalent of a high school diploma and enrolls in a public institution of higher education in 2014. If the person does not have lawful status, he or she must file an affidavit to legalize when eligible to do so.
New Mexico	S 582	2005	This law prohibits denial of college benefits based on a student’s immigration status. It provides for in-state tuition and state-funded financial aid to be granted on the same terms to all people, regardless of immigration status.
New York	S 7784	2001	This law provides that payment of State University of New York or City University of New York tuition by certain non-resident students shall be paid at a rate no greater than that imposed on resident students.
Oregon	H 2787	2013	This law exempts students who are not citizens or lawful permanent residents from nonresident tuition and fees if these conditions are met: three years of attendance at an Oregon school; five years attendance in any U.S., D.C. or Puerto Rico elementary or secondary school; receipt of a high school diploma or equivalent in Oregon within three years of enrolling in an Oregon public university. The student must demonstrate intent to become a citizen or lawful permanent resident by submitting a copy of the student’s application registered with a federal immigration program or federal deportation deferral program or statement to apply as permitted under federal law, and an affidavit of application for a federal individual taxpayer identification number or official federal ID. The law allows for a dependent of a noncitizen to receive similar benefits.
Texas	H 1403	2001	This law grants in-state tuition benefits and state financial aid to immigrant and unauthorized students based on the following conditions: the student must have resided in Texas while attending high school in Texas, graduated from a public or private high school or received a GED in Texas, resided in Texas for three years prior to graduation from high school or receipt of GED, and provide their institution of higher learning a signed affidavit indicating an intent to apply for permanent resident status as soon as able to do so.
Utah	H 144	2002	This law modifies the State System of Higher Education Code, allowing students who meet certain

			requirements to be exempt from paying nonresident tuition at institutions of higher education.
	S 253	2015	This law provides an exemption to verification of lawful presence for privately funded scholarships administered by colleges or universities, for graduates of Utah high schools.
Washington	H 1079	2003	This law defines resident student to include any person who has lived in the state for three years before receiving a diploma or its equivalent from the state of Washington. This would ensure their eligibility for in-state tuition regardless of immigration status.
	H 1488	2018	This law provides that an eligible student must provide the institution an affidavit indicating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity and a willingness to engage in any other activities necessary to acquire citizenship, including but not limited to, citizenship or civics review courses. The law expands the definition of noncitizen students to include refugees and deferred action for childhood arrivals, among others.
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS OFFERING IN-STATE TUITION			
Hawaii	UH Board of Regents Policies Ch 6, S 6-9	2013	The Board of Regents allows unauthorized students to be considered residents of Hawaii for the purposes of tuition and financial assistance if they establish residency by being physically present in Hawaii for 12 months (demonstrating intent to make Hawaii the place of permanent residency), attend a public or private high school in the United States for at least three years, and graduated from or attained the equivalent of such from a U.S. high school. The student must file for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, file an application for legal immigration status, or file an affidavit with the university confirming intent to file as soon as possible.
Maine	UMS Board of Trustees	2017	The University of Maine System offers in-state tuition to qualified Maine residents who have received temporary protections under federal programs for unauthorized students such as those with DACA status.
Michigan	UM Board of Regents	2013	The UM Board of Regents approved changes in guidelines to student qualification for in-state tuition. These new guidelines expand eligibility for in-state tuition to all U.S. military veterans, members of the U.S. Public Health Service and to students who have attended middle school and high school in Michigan (regardless of immigration status).
Oklahoma	H 1804	2007	This law allows the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to adopt a policy that allows a student to enroll in an institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education and be eligible for resident, and any scholarships or financial aid provided by the state.
	Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Policy Manual Ch 3, S 17.6	2007	In accordance with OK HB 1804, an individual who cannot present valid documentation of United States nationality or an immigration status but who graduated from an Oklahoma high school, resided in the state while attending classes for at least two years before graduation, and files an application to legalize their immigration status, is eligible for enrollment and/or out-of-state tuition waivers. Any student who is able to provide these shall not be disqualified on the basis of their immigration status from any scholarships or financial aid provided by the state.
Rhode Island	S 5.0 Residency Policy	2011	Rhode Island's Board of Governors for Higher Education approved a policy allowing unauthorized students to pay in-state tuition at Rhode Island's college if they attended high school in the state for at least three years and graduated. Students must sign an affidavit stating they are pursuing legal status.
STATES OFFERING STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO UNAUTHORIZED STUDENTS			
California	A 131	2011	The California Dream Act allows any person who is exempt from paying nonresident tuition at the California State University, the California Community Colleges, or the University of California to receive scholarships from non-state funds.
New Mexico	S 582	2005	<i>See above.</i>
Maryland	S 532	2018	This law allows individuals are eligible for in-state tuition to be eligible for financial aid. Existing law specifically allows Dreamers who attended and graduated from a Maryland high school to be exempt from paying out-of-state tuition and, in certain instances, out-of-county tuition at community colleges in Maryland under specified circumstances. Nonimmigrant aliens who are in the country on student visas do not qualify for the exemption, but otherwise the exemption applies regardless of residency status.
Minnesota	S 1236	2013	<i>See above.</i>
New Jersey	S 699	2018	This law allows certain undocumented immigrants who meet certain criteria to qualify for state student financial aid programs and prohibits discrimination against eligible students based on

			their immigration status.
Oregon	S 1563	2018	A student at a postsecondary institution of education, who is not a citizen or a lawful permanent U.S. resident, is eligible to receive scholarships, grants, and other financial aid from public universities in the state.
Texas	H 1403	2001	<i>See above.</i>
Washington	S 6523	2014	This law, called the Real Hope Act, extends financial aid to students domiciled in the state of Washington. These resident students may receive aid regardless of immigration status.
	H 1817	2014	This law allows access to the State Need Grant for individuals with DACA status who meet certain criteria, regardless of status. Criteria include completion of the full senior year of high school, received a high school diploma or equivalent from a Washington high school.
STATES BARRING IN-STATE TUITION BENEFITS TO UNAUTHORIZED STUDENTS			
Alabama	H 56	2011	This law bars aliens who are not lawfully present in the United States from enrolling in or attending any public postsecondary education institution in the state of Alabama. An alien attending any public postsecondary education institution must possess lawful permanent residence or an appropriate nonimmigrant visa. This law makes aliens who are not lawfully present in the United States ineligible for any post secondary education benefit, including, but not limited to, scholarship, grants or financial aid.
Arizona	Prop 300	2006	This proposition states that a person who is not a citizen or legal resident of the United States or who is without lawful immigration status is not entitled to classification as an in-state student or entitled to classification as a county resident.
Georgia	S 492	2008	This law states that noncitizen students shall not be classified as in-state for tuition purposes unless the student is legally in the state and there is evidence to warrant consideration of in-state classification as determined by the board of regents.
	State Board of Regents Policy Manual	2010	Georgia's State Board of Regents passed rules regulating the admission of undocumented students. The 35 institutions in the University System of Georgia must verify the lawful presence of all students seeking in-state tuition rates. In addition, any institution that has not admitted all academically qualified applicants in the two most recent years is not allowed to enroll undocumented students. In 2011, this rule affected: The University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, Medical College of Georgia and Georgia College & State University.
Indiana	H 1402	2011	This law states that a person unlawfully present in the United States is ineligible to pay the resident tuition rate.
	S 207	2013	This law amended existing regulation to exempt individuals who enrolled in a state educational institution on or before July 1, 2011.
Missouri	H 3	2015	The preamble of this higher education appropriations law bars funds to institutions of higher education that offer a tuition rate less than the international rate to students with unlawful immigration status, and bars scholarship funds to students with unlawful immigration status.
	H 2003	2016	This law provides that no funds shall be expended at public institutions of higher education that offer a tuition rate to any student with an unlawful immigration status in the United States that is less than the tuition rate charged to international students, and that no scholarship funds shall be expended on behalf of students with an unlawful immigration status in the United States.
South Carolina	H 4400	2008	This law prohibits aliens unlawfully present in the United States from attending a public institution of higher learning within the state. It requires the trustees of a public institution of higher learning to develop and institute a process by which lawful presence in the United States is verified. It states that aliens not eligible based on residence for public higher education benefits including, but not limited to, scholarships, financial aid, grants, or resident tuition.

Source: NCSL Immigrant Policy Project

NCSL Contacts and Resources

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[NCSL Immigrant Policy Project Website](#)
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