

Accessing College as an Undocumented Student

In Minnesota

According to the Migration Policy Institute, approximately 5,000 undocumented students (ages 3-17) reside in Minnesota.

ECMC is committed to the success of all students, regardless of their immigration status. In this changing economy, skills and qualifications that are obtained through education beyond high school are becoming more important to earning a family-wage job. We've gathered some resources to help guide you through the process of accessing and succeeding in college as an undocumented student in Minnesota.

In-State Tuition Equity

Undocumented students can receive in-state tuition and state financial aid in Minnesota through the Minnesota Dream Act (also known as the Prosperity Act). If undocumented students are not eligible for the Minnesota Dream Act, there are several colleges and universities in the state of Minnesota that offer in-state tuition, regardless of a student's immigration status or residence. Several Minnesota state colleges and universities offer in-state tuition rates to students from any state. Check with the college or university you wish to attend for details.

Minnesota Dream Act

The Minnesota Dream Act provides certain benefits to undocumented students who meet the following criteria:

- Attended a Minnesota high school for at least three years
- Graduated from a Minnesota high school or earned a GED in Minnesota
- Registered with the U.S. Selective Service (males 18 to 25 years old only)
- Provide documentation to show they have applied for lawful immigration status but only if a federal process exists for a student to do so (does not

include applying for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)); there is not a federal process in place, so this documentation is not currently required

Students who meet this criteria will be eligible for the following benefits:

- Eligibility for in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities
- Availability of state financial aid to students who meet state residency requirements
- Accessibility to privately funded financial aid through public colleges and universities

The Minnesota Dream Act application and additional details can be found at www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2056.

Other MN Aid Options

Eligible DACA students with work authorization and Social Security numbers can be considered for the State Work Study Program, which allows students to earn money working on campus.

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Eligible Minnesota Dream Act students can also apply for a Postsecondary Child Care Grant. This need-based grant is for students with children in child care while they attend school. Details can be found at www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=348.

Minnesota Dream Act and qualifying DACA students will also be eligible for tuition reciprocity benefits to attend a public college or university in North Dakota or Wisconsin. Students also will be eligible for the Midwest Student Exchange Program that offers reduced tuition at participating colleges in Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio. For more information, visit www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=97.

Any undocumented student can apply for a state SELF Loan, a long-term, low-interest student loan. A SELF Loan does not require the student borrower to have legal status, but does require a co-signer who is a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen—up to \$40,000 with a credit-worthy co-signer. For more information, visit www.selfloan.state.mn.us.

Scholarships

There are many scholarship providers who are interested in helping students, regardless of their immigration status. The following resources have scholarships, both nationally and Minnesota-based, that undocumented students may be eligible for:

- www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=1586
- <http://www.studentsunited.org/scholarships>
- www.page-ed.org/what-we-do/page-grant
- <https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/list-of-scholarships-and-fellowships>
- www.thedream.us/scholarships
- www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources
- <https://scholarshipsaz.org/scholarships>

- www.edvisors.com/plan-for-college/scholarships/college-scholarships/undocumented-student-scholarships
- <https://getschooled.com/article/1320-scholarships-for-undocumented-documented-students-get-that-money>

You may also do your own online scholarship search using terms such as “non-need based,” “merit-based” or “no FAFSA required.”

Help Yourself

Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) allows high school students in grades 10-12 to earn college credit while still in high school. Students can earn both college and high school credits by successfully completing the course(s).

Postsecondary institutions do not charge PSEO students for tuition, textbooks or support services. These are some of the cheapest college credits you will ever earn.

For more information on PSEO, visit <https://education.mn.gov/mde/fam/dual/pseo>.

Keep Your Grades Up

Make yourself a competitive candidate for college admissions and scholarship applications by keeping your grades up, taking challenging classes and participating in extracurricular activities. Some highly selective private colleges and universities offer very generous financial aid packages to outstanding high school students, regardless of immigration status. The more comprehensive your application is, the more options you will have for your education beyond high school.

Need More Information?

The College Place is here to help you with free college-planning resources and personal advice. Visit our website at www.ecmc.org/TCP.