

Accessing College as an Undocumented Student

In Colorado

According to the Migration Policy Institute, approximately 10,000 undocumented students (ages 3-17) reside in Colorado.

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 Colorado.

In-State Tuition Equity

Under the Colorado Advancing Students for a Strong Economy Tomorrow (ASSET) law, eligible undocumented students are now able to qualify for in-state tuition. Each higher education institution has the authority to create its own rules and regulations.

To qualify for ASSET, a student must:

- Have graduated from a Colorado high school or was physically present in Colorado for at least one year immediately preceding the date the student successfully completed a high school equivalency exam in Colorado
- Physically present in Colorado for at least 12 consecutive months prior to enrolling in an institution

Colorado State Aid

Although students with ASSET status do not qualify for federal financial aid, they may qualify for Colorado state aid. The Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA) is the application by which students that meet the qualifications can apply for in-state tuition. Students who do not have lawful immigration status and who do not meet the qualifications for

state aid are also encouraged to apply for institutional aid using the CASFA. Students who are eligible for Federal Title IV aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should not complete the CASFA. For more information on the CASFA, visit <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/students/preparing-for-college/colorado-application-for-state-financial-aid>.

The Colorado Student Grant is awarded to eligible undergraduate students (enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours) who are Colorado residents with documented financial need as demonstrated through the FAFSA.

The Colorado Graduate Grant is awarded to eligible graduate students (enrolled in a minimum of four credit hours) who are Colorado residents with documented financial need as demonstrated through the FAFSA.

Undergraduate students (who are Colorado residents with no prior degree) may also qualify for Colorado Work-Study (need-based or non-need based).

To determine your eligibility for Colorado state aid, check with each institution directly.

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College Opportunity Fund

ASSET students should also apply for the College Opportunity Fund (COF), which is a state benefit that reduces the amount students pay for undergraduate in-state tuition at participating public colleges and universities. The COF application may be completed at <https://cof.college-assist.org>. Applicants who do not have lawful immigration status are required to complete and submit the one-time COF Affidavit, which affirms the student has applied for lawful presence or will do so as soon as they are able to do so. The affidavit is located within the main COF application.

Applicants who do not have a Social Security number (SSN), or who elect not to provide their SSN, will apply for a unique COF ID.

Scholarships

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

- <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

Dual enrollment is an opportunity to take college courses while in high school. Some high schools have partnership agreements with local schools in the Colorado Community College System to provide dual enrollment programs (also known as concurrent enrollment programs)

free of charge. It's important that students and their parents/guardians understand that the amount of work necessary to succeed in dual enrollment courses is greater than what is necessary to succeed in high school courses. In addition, dual enrollment courses become part of a student's permanent college transcripts, so it's essential that students do well in these courses to realize all the benefits of dual enrollment, which include:

- A quality, affordable education close to home
- Enhanced opportunities, both in academic coursework and career and technical education, for outstanding high school students
- Entering college with credits applicable to a student's degree program
- Gaining an understanding of the rigor of college work as well as college faculty expectations
- Access to college resources, facilities and services, such as advising and career counseling

Interested students must first speak with their school counselor about the dual enrollment program options available to them.

Homeschooled students are also eligible for the program. Contact your local community college to discuss the options available to you.

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.