

# Accessing college as an undocumented student

In Oregon

Impossible

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 Oregon.

*A recent estimate by Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission shows approximately 4,550 undocumented students in Oregon.*

## In-state tuition equity

Oregon students who meet the following criteria pay in-state tuition at Oregon Public Universities:

- Studied in the United States for at least five years
- Attended an Oregon high school for at least three years
- Graduated from an Oregon high school (or received an equivalent certification)
- Applied for federal individual taxpayer identification or other official federal identification document
- Showed intention to become a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident

To receive in-state tuition, be sure to complete the undergraduate student admissions process; answer the citizenship question as "non-U.S. citizen." Each college has their own affidavit or Tuition Equity Statement for you to complete. Feel free to discuss your situation openly with the admissions office staff at each university; it is their job to help you navigate through the admission and tuition equity process.

## Oregon Promise

The Oregon Promise Grant will offset tuition costs after a \$50 per term copay and state grants (see below) have been applied. Students must meet the following criteria:

- Receive an Oregon high school diploma or GED in spring/summer 2016
- Have been an Oregon resident for at least 12 months prior to community college enrollment
- Enroll in community college within six months of completing high school or GED
- Have a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher

Applications for the Oregon Promise are accepted from October 1 through March 1 at [www.oregonpromise.org](http://www.oregonpromise.org). If your plans don't currently include community college attendance, please complete the application. This will give you a solid back-up college in case your plans change over the year.

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## Oregon Opportunity Grant

Undocumented students who qualify based on financial need are able to receive Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) funds for their attendance at an Oregon community college, Oregon public university or participating Oregon independent college. Students apply through the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC), using the Oregon State Aid Application (ORSAA) in place of the FAFSA.

ORSAA and additional details may be found at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov/apply-here.aspx](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/apply-here.aspx).

## OSAC scholarships

Oregon is unique in that more than 475 scholarships for Oregon students share a common application and common due date of March 1 each year.

Although not every scholarship is open to undocumented students, you may search through the OSAC catalog for those scholarships that do not require the FAFSA. To access scholarship information and search for those that do not require the FAFSA, go to [www.getcollegefunds.org/scholarship.aspx](http://www.getcollegefunds.org/scholarship.aspx).

Most importantly, many of these scholarships can be used for expenses other than tuition, such as fees, books, supplies, room, board, transportation, study abroad and personal expenses.

## Other scholarships

There are many scholarship providers who are interested in helping students, regardless of their immigration status. The following resources have collected information on scholarships that do not require a Social Security number or a completed FAFSA:

- [www.e4fc.org/resources/scholarshiplist.html](http://www.e4fc.org/resources/scholarshiplist.html)
- [www.latinocollegedollars.org](http://www.latinocollegedollars.org)
- [www.maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/](http://www.maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/)
- [www.scholarshipsaz.org/scholarships](http://www.scholarshipsaz.org/scholarships)

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

## Help yourself

If your high school offers Dual Credit (attending a course at your high school and earning both high school and college credit for the course), take advantage of the program. These are some of the cheapest college credits you will ever earn, and some colleges, such as Portland Community College, offer Dual Credit free of charge.

Keep your grades up, take challenging classes, participate in extracurricular activities, and do everything you can to make yourself a competitive candidate for college admissions and scholarship applications. Some selective private independent schools offer very generous financial aid packages to outstanding high school students, regardless of immigration status. The higher your grades, the more options you will have for your education beyond high school.

Some of Oregon’s independent colleges offer an Individual Development Account (IDA) where they will match your college savings with FIVE dollars for every ONE dollar you save. (Note: These funds can only be used at the sponsoring colleges.) Go to [www.mycollegesavings.org](http://www.mycollegesavings.org) for more information.

Even if you don’t plan on attending a private college and, therefore, don’t qualify for the 5:1 match, saving as much money as possible for your college education is a good idea. Go to [www.cfed.org](http://www.cfed.org) for a list of other IDA programs in Oregon that may match your college savings.

## Need more information?

The College Place is here to help you with free college-planning resources and personal advice. Call us at 1-866-326-2827 or visit our website at [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).