

Accessing College as an Undocumented Student

In Connecticut

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 Connecticut.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, approximately 8,000 undocumented students (ages 3-17) reside in Connecticut.

In-State Tuition Equity Connecticut State Aid

In 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly approved a law that offers undocumented students residing in Connecticut in-state tuition benefits at the state's public institutions of higher education. The law was then expanded in 2015, reducing the requirement for Connecticut high school attendance from four years to two under HB 6844. To be eligible for in-state tuition at a state institution, students must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a resident of Connecticut
- Have attended at least two years of high school in Connecticut
- Have graduated (or received the equivalent of a high school diploma) from a Connecticut high school
- Submit an affidavit with their Connecticut institution of higher education stating that they have filed an application to legalize their immigration status or will file an application as soon as they are eligible to do so

Colleges screen students for eligibility for in-state tuition under this bill and will contact students directly if there are questions regarding in-state residency eligibility.

Institutional Aid (Public Institutions)

Undocumented students do not qualify for Connecticut state grants. However, undocumented students are eligible to apply for institutional aid, which is awarded on the basis of financial need and fund availability. To be eligible, students must meet the following criteria:

- Classified as an in-state student for tuition purposes
- 30 years of age or younger on June 15, 2012
- 16 years of age or younger upon arrival in the United States with continuous residence in the United States since such arrival
- No felony convictions in Connecticut or another state
- Signed affidavit of intent to legalize one's immigration status when eligible to do so

Undocumented veterans must meet the following criteria:

- Honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces

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- 30 years of age or younger on June 15, 2012
- 15 years of age or younger upon arrival in the United States with continuous residence in the United States since such arrival
- No felony convictions in Connecticut or another state

In addition, undocumented students must meet the following requirements:

- Classified as an in-state student for tuition purposes
- Be accepted into a degree or eligible certificate program
- Meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy at the attending institution
- Meet any priority deadlines or requirements published by the attending institution related to the receipt of institutional financial aid

The Aid Application for CT Undocumented Students (AACTUS) is available on every public college and university website.

Institutional Aid (Private Institutions)

Some private colleges in Connecticut meet the full demonstrated financial need of all students, including undocumented students. Most of these colleges are highly selective, requiring high GPAs, a challenging high school curriculum and extracurricular activities. Many are now test optional. Some may accept community college graduates as transfer students.

For more information, search online for “colleges that meet full financial need for undocumented students.” Then, check the financial aid websites of the listed colleges to confirm their financial aid policies. Contact the financial aid offices with any questions.

Refer to www.cappex.com/articles/match-and-fit/college-options-undocumented-students.

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 Connecticut-based, that undocumented students may be eligible for:

- www.ct4adream.org
- <https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/list-of-scholarships-and-fellowships>
- www.thedream.us/scholarships
- www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources
- <https://scholarshipsaz.org/scholarships>
- <https://getschooled.com/article/1320-scholarships-for-undocumented-documented-students-get-that-money>
- www.edvisors.com/scholarships/college-scholarships/undocumented-student-scholarships

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

Help Yourself

High School Partnership Program (HSPP)

Dual enrollment is an opportunity to take college courses while in high school. Many Connecticut high schools have HSPP agreements with their local community colleges to provide dual enrollment classes 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

College Career Pathways (CCP)

Many Connecticut high schools provide this dual enrollment program in which classes are taught in the high school by high school teachers who collaborate with community college professors. Students may receive both high school and college credit for the same class.

Other Dual Enrollment Programs

Some high schools also have agreements with Connecticut public and/or private four-year institutions to provide dual enrollment programs free of charge. These programs may be called Early College, Early College Experience (ECE) or similar names. Ask your high school counselor about these options.

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.