

# Accessing college as an undocumented student

## In Virginia

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 Virginia.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, approximately 20,000 undocumented students (ages 3-17) reside in Virginia.

### In-state tuition equity (Virginia Dream Act)

The Virginia DREAM Act requires students to meet the following criteria to be eligible to pay in-state tuition at Virginia public universities:

- Attended high school in Virginia for at least two years
- Graduated from a Virginia high school (or received an equivalent certification) since July 1, 2008
- Filed income tax returns by student or legal guardian for at least two years prior to date of college enrollment

Contact your college admissions office for additional information.

### Institutional aid and support

Though Virginia does not provide state aid to undocumented students, several colleges offer institutional aid and/or other means of support for undocumented students. View the colleges' websites to find information on how they support 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 Virginia-based, which undocumented students may be eligible for:

- [www.goldendoorscholars.org](http://www.goldendoorscholars.org)
- <https://immigrantsrising.org/resources/>
- [www.thedream.us/scholarships](http://www.thedream.us/scholarships)
- [www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources/](http://www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources/)
- [www.scholarshipsaz.org/scholarships](http://www.scholarshipsaz.org/scholarships)
- <https://getschooled.com/article/1320-scholarships-for-undocumented-daca-mented-students-get-that-money/>
- [www.edvisors.com/scholarships/college-scholarships/undocumented-student-scholarships/](http://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."

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## Help yourself

Some high schools have partnership agreements with local schools in the Virginia Community College System to provide dual enrollment programs free of charge. It's important that students and their parents understand 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
- Enriched course opportunities for outstanding high school students both in academic coursework and in career and technical education
- 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 and contact their local college to register and take the college placement exam. Students must also meet the following criteria:

- High school juniors or seniors attending a public or private school (exceptional freshman and sophomores may be eligible with approval from both high school principal and college president)
- Meet or exceed college placement requirements
- Receive a recommendation from a high school official
- Have parental consent provided prior to student enrollment

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](http://www.ecmc.org/TCP).