

## FLORIDA'S IN-STATE TUITION WAIVER FOR DREAMERS STRENGTHENS THE STATE

Stripping in-state tuition access from Dreamers in Florida would harm both these young longtime residents of the state and the future of Florida's economy and competitiveness.

TheDream.US is the nation's largest scholarship provider for Dreamers. In Florida, our Scholars attend one of eight state Partner Colleges throughout the state: Broward College, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, Miami Dade College, Palm Beach State College, University of Central Florida, University of South Florida, and Valencia College. Through these partnerships, TheDream.US has awarded more than 1,150 scholarships to Florida Dreamers.

**Thanks to the in-state tuition waiver and our support, this has opened the doors of opportunity for state residents to achieve their higher education and career goals and contribute to the vitality, competitiveness, and future of Florida.**

- **Putting their degrees to work in Florida.** Nearly 500 former TheDream.US Scholars now call themselves a college graduate. The vast majority of our graduates still reside in Florida and these graduates' top three occupations are in health and medicine, business, and education industries.
- **Deep roots and ties to Florida.** Among our Florida Scholars and alums, their average age of arrival to the U.S. is just 4 years old. This means they have grown up in-state, graduated from Florida high schools, and are now poised to put their degrees to work for their home state and communities.
- **Becoming essential parts of Florida's workforce.** The top three fields of study among Florida TheDream.US Scholars are health and medicine (30%), Science, Math, and Technology (27%), and Business (16%).
- **In-state tuition is an essential element of Florida Dreamers' college access.** To qualify for the in-state tuition waiver, recipients must have a minimum of three consecutive years of Florida high school and have graduated from a Florida high school. Dreamers are not eligible for state or federal financial aid and, even though many meet the Bright Futures criteria, they are ineligible for these merit scholarships.

It is in the state's interest to keep these students studying and succeeding in their home state and to make Florida higher education accessible and affordable for Dreamers by keeping the in-state tuition waiver in place.

## EXAMPLES OF FLORIDA-BASED THEDREAM.US SCHOLARS AND ALUMS INCLUDE:



### **DIEGO, a 2022 magna cum laude graduate of the University of South Florida:**

"I'm not a fan of beaches or amusement parks, but the one thing that's kept me in Florida is the people. USF was a difficult education journey for me, but the students, staff, and faculty made it so worthwhile. In-state tuition was part of the only reason I could even obtain a higher education ... eliminating the waiver would make it impossible."



### **HELENA, a Master's degree candidate who works with autistic children:**

"I am in my last semester of my Master's of Exceptional Student Education, specializing in behavior analysis and autism. I currently work with children on the autism spectrum. I love helping them better their independence, gain self advocacy and daily skills. I am using my hard-earned education for the better of my community. There is a waitlist of families that are in need of help but are waitlisted due to not enough staff. If I did not have the in-state tuition waiver, I would not have gotten an associate's degree and I would have given up and felt so lost in a state that I have grown up in since I was 7."



### **BELLA, a Florida International University student and TheDream.US Scholar:**

"I am a Floridian. I graduated from high school here and lead the youth group at my church. Today I'm a junior studying to become a psychologist because I've come to understand how critical mental health resources are to our communities. Being forced to pay out-of-state tuition would make it impossible. I have been in Florida for eight years and I'm planning to be here for 80 more."



### **MURILO, a medical student at Nova Southeastern University KPCOM:**

"If I had not been able to afford my undergraduate degree, a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Florida Atlantic University, then I would be unable to pursue this dream of becoming a physician to care and treat others. Were it not for in-state tuition, I would not have been able to afford my education ... The legislation that allowed in-state tuition also was one that made me feel like I belonged in the community. I love Florida's hard working mentality, its diversity and how those two components come together. Here, you meet people from all over the country and the world who believe in the American dream and work together alongside each other to achieve it."



### **CESIA, a graduate of Florida International University with a degree in Computer Science, now works as an Engineering Program Manager at a Fortune 50 company:**

"Early in my college journey at Florida International University, I found my passion for computer science when I served as the Director of Mangohacks – a 36-hour hackathon. I am now working at a Fortune 50 company as an engineering program manager leading a team of engineers. I would not have been able to achieve what I have today without in-state tuition and TheDream.US"

*Watch an award winning FIU video [HERE](#) about Cesia and the university's support for Dreamers.*



### **ALEXANDER, a Florida International University graduate who hopes to become a physician assistant:**

"I was born in Santiago, Chile, and came to the United States as a 1-year-old. In-state tuition has paved the way for many Florida Dreamers' careers. I hope to become a physician assistant and provide primary care to my community. A community that I love because of its diversity, friendliness, and tropical weather."