

PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE | ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION

The Case for MA In-State Tuition & Financial Aid for Dreamers

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Extending in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students makes [economic, educational, and practical sense](#). Passing tuition equity legislation will result in positive impacts on education access, economic growth, workforce development, retention of talent, entrepreneurship, innovation, and the state's overall competitive advantage.

- **It is time-sensitive:** The issue of passing tuition equity in Massachusetts arises as colleges and universities are finalizing financial aid packages, potentially resulting in a missed opportunity for many more students if tuition equity fails to be included in the FY 2024 budget.
- **Cost & Revenue Benefits:** By extending tuition equity to undocumented students, the state would be investing in the education and skills development of its residents, which can have long-term economic benefits for the state:
 - According to the [Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation](#), “based on the weighted averages of in-state tuition and fee costs for community colleges, state universities, and the University of Massachusetts system, undocumented students would generate approximately \$2.6 million to \$3.5 million in revenue for public higher education institutions.”
 - An [analysis](#) by the National Immigration Law Center found that, “[a]ccording to experts in the states that have adopted tuition equity laws or policies, the cost of implementing them has been negligible.”
 - Receiving a postsecondary credential or even attending some college [increases](#) one’s earning potential, and college graduates, including Dreamers, contribute significantly to the economy.
 - DACA-eligible residents in Massachusetts [contributed](#) \$41.5M in state and local taxes and \$68.6M in federal taxes.
- **Workforce Development:** Massachusetts has a growing demand for skilled workers in various industries. Extending in-state tuition to undocumented students would help meet this demand by equipping them with the necessary education and training to fill those positions.
 - A recent [report](#) by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation found that “workforce shortages will worsen” in Massachusetts. This is in part because tax filers aged 26 to 35 dominate the outflow of people leaving the state, thereby contributing to the declining working-age population.
 - Many undocumented graduate students hold degrees in STEM and healthcare fields. A third of undocumented students pursuing advanced degrees have an undergraduate STEM degree. Among all undocumented graduate students with a STEM undergraduate degree, 23.1 percent have a degree in a healthcare-related field, an especially important finding as the COVID-19 crisis shed light on the nation’s severe shortages across the healthcare industry, from physicians to home health aides.

- **Access to Education:** College enrollment rates [have declined](#) in Massachusetts over the past eight years. Extending in-state tuition to undocumented students in Massachusetts would provide greater access to higher education for a significant portion of the population and address part of the decline.
 - Extending in-state tuition, and especially providing access to state financial aid, to undocumented students [results](#) in reduced high school dropout rates, increased college enrollment, and greater student achievement for these students.
- **Competitive Advantage:** [23 states and DC](#) have already implemented policies to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students, and 17 states and DC also have extended state financial aid.
 - By extending in-state tuition and state financial aid, Massachusetts would align itself with these successful policies and remain competitive in attracting talented individuals to its educational institutions.
 - Implementing these policies would enhance the state's reputation as a hub for academic excellence and attract students from diverse backgrounds.
- **Keeping Local Talent:** Undocumented students who are unable to afford out-of-state tuition rates often leave Massachusetts to pursue higher education in states with more inclusive policies. By extending in-state tuition, Massachusetts can retain talented individuals, prevent a brain drain and capitalize on the investments made in individuals' K-12 education within the state
 - There are less than [12,000 students in higher education](#) in Massachusetts, but a recent report estimated that [3,000 undocumented students](#) in Massachusetts graduate high school annually.
- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Undocumented students, when given access to higher education, have shown remarkable entrepreneurial spirit and innovation. By supporting their educational aspirations through in-state tuition, Massachusetts can tap into the potential of these individuals to start businesses, create jobs, and drive innovation within the state's economy.
- **Social and Cultural Contributions:** Undocumented students are an integral part of the social fabric of Massachusetts. Extending in-state tuition recognizes the many contributions of undocumented students to the state's diverse communities. By investing in their education, Massachusetts can create a more inclusive and cohesive society, fostering social and cultural enrichment.
- **Broadly Supported:** A broad range of leaders, organizations, and experts are supportive of Massachusetts expanding in-state tuition eligibility - including the state's community colleges, state universities, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, the MA Business Roundtable, Stories Inspiring Movements (SIM), the MIRA Coalition, Brazilian Worker Center, the [Boston Globe editorial board](#), Governor Healey, and a broad range of [immigrant-serving organizations and allies](#).

For resources, visit [MA Tuition Equity for Dreamers: What You Need to Know](#)