

# Immigration Status & Financial Aid Eligibility in Massachusetts

Unsure how your immigration status might affect your eligibility for financial aid for college in Massachusetts? Here’s everything you need to know. And remember - every person’s situation is unique, so make an appointment with your guidance counselor or email [studentsupport@uaspire.org](mailto:studentsupport@uaspire.org) for individualized advice.

**Disclaimer: uAspire, your school guidance counselor, and colleges will not share your immigration status with anyone.**

## Financial aid application completion recommendations

Immigration status	Financial aid application to complete	Eligible for in-state tuition?	Aid you can receive		
			Federal	State	Institutional
Permanent Resident (Green Card holder)	<b>FAFSA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DACA**	<b>MASFA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Valid TPS**	<b>MASFA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asylum/refugee granted	<b>FAFSA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seeker (not yet granted)**	<b>MASFA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, TN, TD, U Visas	<b>CSS Profile; institutional application</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Valid T, T-1 visas	<b>FAFSA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No status**	<b>MASFA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\*\*If you also have three years of attendance at a Massachusetts high school and graduate from a Massachusetts high school (or attain the equivalent). See more information on page 2

## Tuition Equity Law & In-State Tuition Rates

MA residents who are ineligible for the FAFSA due to their immigration status may be able to access **in-state tuition rates** at public colleges and universities in Massachusetts, and be eligible for **state-funded financial aid** under the MA Tuition Equity law.

### Two ways to qualify for in-state tuition rates in MA:



#### Pathway 1: Residency-based eligibility

- Be a U.S. Citizen, lawful immigrant (Green Card holder), or be authorized by the federal government to live and work in the U.S. on a temporary or permanent basis (**including DACA recipients, those with TPS, and asylum seekers with work authorization**).

OR

- Reside in Massachusetts for at least one year (with parent or legal guardian, if dependent).
- Submit required documentation.



#### Pathway 2: Massachusetts High School Completer Status

- Attend high school in Massachusetts for at least 3 years.
- Earn a high school diploma or alternative (HiSET, GED) in Massachusetts.
- Submit required documentation (*one of the following*):
  - Valid Social Security Number
  - Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) documentation
  - Selective Service Registration
  - Signed affidavit stating intent to apply for citizenship or legal residency within 120 days of eligibility

If you are eligible for in-state tuition under the MA High School Completer Status pathway, you may also be eligible to apply for Massachusetts state financial aid programs. **Check out steps to apply on the next page.**

# MASFA & the Application Process

The **Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA)** is the financial aid application that will determine how much state financial aid you're eligible to receive.



**MASFA Priority deadline: May 1, 2026**

## Eligibility requirements:

- Be ineligible to complete the FAFSA
- Be undocumented, a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient, have Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or have a U visa
- Attend high school in Massachusetts for at least 3 years.
- Earn a high school diploma or alternative (HiSET, GED) in Massachusetts.
- Submit required documentation.

## Steps to apply:

1

### Submit the MASFA

- Check out the MA Department of Higher Education's [2026-2027 MASFA Application Guide and FAQ](#) for a detailed application walkthrough.
- Complete the [FAFSA/MASFA Eligibility Questionnaire](#) and follow the link to "File 2026-2027 MASFA"
- Create an account, and fill out the MASFA. The application will require personal and tax information for you, the student applicant, and your parent(s).
- Respond to all follow-up requests for additional information

2

### Complete the [Tuition Equity Form and Affidavit](#)

- Determine your college of choice's specific instructions for completing the form - some may use the PDF linked here, others may have their own electronic version of the form on their website.
- Submit required documentation.
- Check your [MASSAid student portal](#) (which uses the same login as the MASFA) to see your eligibility for state aid and update your current institution if necessary

## Resources & Additional Information

### Legal Services:

Meeting with an immigration lawyer is important. They can help you and your family identify your immigration status and explore potential immigration remedies. If you have already met with a lawyer but didn't feel confident about the legal advice you received, refer to the list of contacts below:

- Students enrolled in **Boston Public Schools, Malden, & Somerville:**
  - Schedule a free consultation for free/low-cost legal services at the [Rian Immigrant Center](#) by calling 617-542-7654 ext. 176. Leave a message with your contact information and a staff member will return your call.
  - Contact [Greater Boston Legal Services](#) at (617) 371-1234 to see if you qualify for free or low-cost legal services.
- Residents of Fall River:
  - Contact Immigration Law Education and Advocacy Project (ILEAP) at the Immigration Department at Catholic Charities at (508) 674-4681
- Residents of Cambridge:
  - Contact De Novo Center for Justice and Healing at (617) 661-1010
- Do NOT seek immigration advice from a notary public. Notary publics do not have the legal expertise that an immigration lawyer will have.

### Notes & Suggestions:

- Although your parent's immigration status doesn't affect your eligibility for federal financial aid, it may impact the steps you take to apply.
- If you are eligible to complete the FAFSA, both you and your parents will need to create a studentaid.gov account. See our resource on [how to create an account here](#).
- Some colleges may instead require the CSS Profile, which can make you eligible for need-based, institutional financial aid. Check with each school to confirm their requirements.
- Searching "undocumented students" on individual colleges' websites can give you a better idea of the resources available on that specific campus.
- Apply for as many scholarships as possible, and apply early! Be sure to read all eligibility requirements carefully and never misrepresent your status on applications.
  - Check out this [list of scholarships that don't require proof of citizenship](#), from Immigrants Rising.
- If your immigration status changes during the application process or while you're enrolled, your eligibility for financial aid may also change.

## Helpful terms

**FAFSA:** Free application for Federal Student Aid, the main financial aid form that colleges request and most require before they can grant any financial aid to students.

**MASFA:** Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid, the financial aid application that allows students who are not able to complete the FAFSA due to immigration status, as a way to apply for need-based, state financial aid in MA.

**CSS Profile:** A financial aid application that only some colleges require (mostly private colleges). It does not require a social security number, and anyone can fill it out if they're applying to a CSS Profile-participating college.

**In-state tuition:** Public colleges cost less for residents of that state than for out-of-state students.

**Tuition Equity Law:** Laws or policies that permit certain students who have attended and graduated from high school in their state to pay the same tuition rates as their "in-state" classmates, at their state's public institutions of higher education, regardless of their immigration status. Massachusetts's Tuition Equity law passed in 2023.

**Federal & state aid:** Financial aid that is awarded through the U.S. and state governments, based on financial information from the FAFSA or MASFA.

**Institutional aid:** Financial aid that is awarded through the college and can be need-based or merit-based. Colleges have differing policies on how they award their aid. If you have a valid non-immigrant visa, you may be classified as an international student, which can impact eligibility for institutional aid.

**Need-based:** Aid awarded based on a family's financial need, using information from the FAFSA, MASFA, CSS Profile, and/or institutional financial aid forms.

**Merit-based:** Aid awarded without regard for financial need, usually for a student's academic achievements, special talents, or participation in an activity.