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 for individualized advice.

Disclaimer: uAspire, your school guidance counselor, and colleges will not share your immigration staus 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)	FAFSA	☑	☑	☑	☑
DACA**	MASFA	☑	☐	☑	☑
Valid TPS**	MASFA	☑	☐	☑	☑
Asylum/refugee granted	FAFSA	☑	☑	☑	☑
Asylum seeker (not yet granted)**	MASFA	☑	☐	☑	☑
U Visas	MASFA	☑	☐	☑	☑
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, TN, TD, Visas	CSS Profile; institutional application	☐	☐	☐	☑
Valid T, T-1 visas	FAFSA	☑	☑	☑	☑
No status**	MASFA	☑	☐	☑	☑

**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

© uAspire 2026

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 i**n-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.**

© uAspire 2026

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

© uAspire 2026

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.

© uAspire 2026

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 finanical need, usually for a student's academic achievements, special talents, or participation in an activity.

© uAspire 2026