



Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

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AB 540 Makes Higher Education More Affordable for California's Undocumented Students

AB 540 Requirements

Since January 1, 2002, California's AB 540 law allows qualified students, including undocumented students, to be exempt from paying out-of-state tuition at California's public colleges and universities (Community College, CSU and UC). Under AB 540, students pay the equivalent of in-state tuition. Private colleges and universities such as Loyola Marymount, USC, ITT Tech, Bryman, and Pasadena Art Institute are not covered by AB 540.

To Qualify for the AB 540 Tuition Exemption a Student Must Comply with the Following:

<p>1. Attend a high school in CALIFORNIA for 3 years or more; AND</p>	<p>2. Have a high school diploma from a California high school or the equivalent (GED, CA HS Proficiency Exam); AND</p>	<p>3. For undocumented students, file an affidavit with the college or university stating that the student is in the process of adjusting his or her immigration status or will do so as soon as the student is eligible.</p>
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Cost Difference for In-State v. Out-of-State Tuition in 2008 -2009

The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition is significant. All of the amounts shown below are averages and the actual tuition amount may vary from campus to campus. Tuition rates may also include other fees specific to each campus, which were not included below:

<u>California Community Colleges</u>	
\$20.00/unit (in-state)	\$173.00/unit (out-of-state)
 <u>California State University (CSU) (per year)</u>	
\$3,797.00 (in-state)	\$13,967.00 (out-of-state)
 <u>University of California (UC) (per year)</u>	
\$8,007.00 (in-state)	\$28,615.00 (out-of-state)

CONFIDENTIALITY

AB 540 requires that state colleges and universities keep student information confidential. The privacy of information a student shares with a college or university is protected by federal and state law.

Immigration Concerns

- AB 540 **DOES NOT** change your residency status, nor does it provide a pathway to citizenship.
- Undocumented students who have questions about legal residency should consult a licensed immigration attorney.
- Making false statements about your immigration status creates serious legal problems. If you have made false statements in the past, consult with a licensed immigration attorney.
- Contact your local bar association for referrals to licensed immigration attorneys in your area. Beware of immigration fraud through notaries ("notarios") and other non-licensed immigration assistance agencies.

Financial Aid

- Undocumented students in the U.S. **DO NOT** qualify for any type of state or federal financial aid. AB 540 **DOES NOT** provide financial aid to undocumented students.
- Students who need financial assistance should apply for private scholarships that do not require the applicant to provide a Social Security number or be a legal permanent resident or a U.S. citizen in order to be eligible to receive the scholarship.
- Check our website, www.maldef.org, for a list of private scholarships and additional information regarding AB 540.