

It's time: Why Massachusetts should extend in-state tuition and state financial aid to *all* local high school graduates

At least 20 states and the District of Columbia have laws or policies enabling students who meet certain criteria to pay in-state tuition at public colleges and universities, regardless of immigration status. A growing number of states also offer state financial aid to these students.¹

Yet in Massachusetts, where 1 in 6 residents is foreign-born,² and immigrants and their children make up a large share of public school enrollment in many districts,³ bills to extend in-state tuition and state financial aid to all eligible high school graduates have failed to advance in the Legislature. **For thousands of students, that means college is simply beyond reach.** In Massachusetts, students with DACA or Temporary Protected Status (TPS) qualify for in-state tuition, but undocumented students don't – no matter how long they've lived here. And all these students, including DACA and TPS holders, are ineligible for federal or state financial aid.

Current State Laws & Policies on Access to Higher Education for Immigrants | June 2019



For context, attending Bunker Hill Community College full-time in 2019–2020 (15 credits per term, excluding health insurance, books, etc.) will cost \$6,090 with in-state tuition, and \$12,270 at out-of-state rates. At Framingham State University, in-state tuition and fees for day students are \$11,100, while the out-of-state price is \$17,180. At UMass Boston, the costs are \$14,167 and \$33,966, respectively.⁴

Four bills before the Legislature aim to close the opportunity gap: S.740, sponsored by Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz, and **H.1239**, sponsored by Rep. Denise Provost, would qualify students for in-state tuition and state financial aid if they attended a high school in the Commonwealth for three or more years, and they graduated from a local high school, or obtained a high school equivalency diploma here, with some conditions. Two other bills, **S.739**, sponsored by Sen. Harriette Chandler, and **H.1236**, sponsored by Rep. Michael Moran, would qualify these students for in-state tuition, but leave state financial aid rules unchanged.

Thousands of current public school students – and many more graduates – could benefit. The Migration Policy Institute estimates, based on 2012–2016 U.S. Census data, that 14,000 undocumented immigrants ages 3–17 are enrolled in Massachusetts public schools, and another 26,000 ages 18–24 live in the state.⁵ Right now, no matter how talented, hard-working or ambitious, most of these young people have little hope after high school.

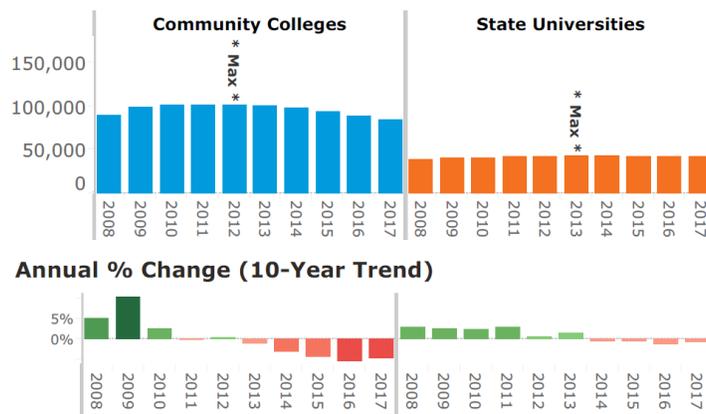
Reviews of studies in multiple states by the National Immigration Law Center have found that **the cost of implementing policies like these has been negligible**, because in-state tuition, while discounted, still brings in new revenue for colleges and universities.⁶ Most undocumented students who can't get in-state tuition don't pay out-of-state rates; they simply don't enroll.

Immigrants deserve to benefit from the tax dollars they pay. Undocumented immigrants in Massachusetts pay an estimated **\$184.5 million** per year in state and local taxes – including sales and excise, property and personal income taxes.⁷ With higher education, they will be able to contribute more to tax coffers in the future.

In Massachusetts, public higher education enrollment is declining. This is a chance to bring in new students – while investing in our future work force.

Students of color, especially Latinos, are a growing share of enrollment at community colleges and state universities. Latino enrollment jumped 60% from 2008 to 2017 in the community colleges, and 175% in the state universities, even as total headcounts declined. In-state tuition and state financial aid would attract young people who can't afford college now, or can only take one or two classes at a time.⁸ We shouldn't assume that they'll have the same immigration status indefinitely.

Undergraduate Students Enrolled—By Segment



Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Tuition equity also boosts academic achievement. States that have adopted such policies have found they reduce drop-out rates, increase the number of graduates who pursue a college degree, and raise student incomes and tax contributions, among other social and economic benefits. The students likeliest to seize these new opportunities are high achievers – goal-oriented, ambitious young people determined to succeed.⁹

This briefing note was written by Marion Davis. It was last updated on Jan. 3, 2020.

It's time to ensure all young people can get an education. ACT NOW: bit.ly/MA-highered

¹ *Basic Facts About In-State Tuition for Undocumented Immigrant Students*. National Immigration Law Center, updated July 2019. <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/basic-facts-instate/>. Map reproduced from <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccess toolkit/eduaccess toolkit2/#maps>.

² Massachusetts immigration data profile, Migration Policy Institute. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/MA>.

³ *English Learners in Massachusetts: Demographics, Outcomes, and State Accountability Policies*. Migration Policy Institute, August 2018. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/EL-factsheet2018-Massachusetts_Final.pdf.

⁴ See schools' websites: Bunker Hill – <https://www.bhcc.edu/tuition/>; Framingham State – <https://www.framingham.edu/admissions-and-aid/student-accounts/tuition-fees/>; UMass Boston – <https://admissions.umb.edu/freshman-students/cost-and-aid/>.

⁵ *Profile of the Unauthorized Population: Massachusetts*. Migration Policy Institute, 2016. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/MA>. Note that MPI's estimates are conservative; the Pew Research Center's latest estimate of the undocumented population in Massachusetts is over 40% larger than MPI's: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-by-state/>.

⁶ *Basic Facts About In-State Tuition* (see endnote 1). Also see NILC's sampling of state fiscal analyses: <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccess toolkit/toolkit-access-to-postsecondary-education-2/>.

⁷ *Undocumented Immigrants' State & Local Tax Contributions*, Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, March 2017. <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-state-local-tax-contributions-2/>.

⁸ Massachusetts Department of Higher Education data: community college minority headcount – <http://www.mass.edu/datacenter/access/CCMinorityHTC.asp>; state university minority headcount – <http://www.mass.edu/datacenter/access/SUMinorityHTC.asp>. Graphic reproduced from slideshow: "2017 Enrollment at Massachusetts Public Colleges & Universities – Trends, Challenges & Opportunities," last updated April 19, 2018, <https://www.mass.edu/datacenter/2017enrollmentestimates.asp>.

⁹ See NILC's sampling of research studies: <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/estimates-of-eligible-students/toolkit-access-to-postsecondary-education-2/#access>.