

# DREAMer Initiative

ADVOCATING FOR EQUAL ACCESS  
TO FINANCIAL AID FOR DREAMERS  
THROUGH PRIVATE, STATE, AND  
INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

**HNBA Law Student Division supported by the  
Civil Rights Section, and Immigration Law Section**

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## Who is a DREAMer?

**DREAMers** are **undocumented youth** who **would** be **protected** by **legislation** providing a **path** to **citizenship**, therefore allowing DREAMers to safely attend **school** and **work**. Currently, the only legal protection for some DREAMers is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals ("DACA"). DACA has provided about 800,000 young undocumented DREAMers work authorization and social security numbers to attend school and work. Over 3 million other DREAMers are currently undocumented, meaning they have no legal status. According to the U.S. Department of Education, every year, approximately 80,000 DREAMers turn 18 and about 65,000 graduate from high school. Even though these DREAMers can attend college only five to ten percent enroll in an institution of higher education.



## Financial obstacles

DREAMers can attend College or Universities but most States do not offer funding, meaning that DREAMers must pay out of pocket or use scarce private funding sources. **20 States - California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington — and the District of Columbia** have **Tuition Equity Laws**, allowing undocumented students who meet specific requirements, regardless of their immigration status, to pay **In-State Tuition** rates at public postsecondary institutions. Additionally, about ten States offer **State Financial Aid** for DREAMers: **California, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Washington — and the District of Columbia.**

## How can you help?

### **EMBOLDEN PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIP DONORS/MANAGERS TO DROP THE "CITIZENSHIP" REQUIREMENT**

Many private donors or scholarship funds may not be aware of the effects of requiring student applicants to be "citizens" or "residents". You can urge them to drop any "citizenship" requirement to any scholarships they fund directly or indirectly. This will open more funds up to DREAMers.

### **EDUCATE YOUR STATE LEGISLATURE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DREAMER FRIENDLY LAWS**

State legislators can implement Tuition Equity Laws that would allow students to pay In-State Tuition regardless of their citizenship. If your State already has this law in place, encourage legislators to allow State Financial Aid for DREAMers. If your State already has these laws make sure they are being properly implemented and spread the word! For information on your State go to <https://uleadnet.org/>.

### **ENCOURAGE YOUR ALMA MATER TO IMPLEMENT DREAMER FRIENDLY POLICIES**

As an alumni, you can inquire about your school's policies towards DREAMers. Encourage your alma mater to audit their financial aid policies and drop any citizenship requirements for scholarships they offer to students. Make sure that all types of funding are inclusive: i.e. scholarships, grants, and work-study. State schools can implement scholarships through non-profit scholarship managers or other community partners. If you donate funds to your alma mater, make sure those funds are available to DREAMers. Some schools may also be able to issue tuition waivers if that State does not have Tuition Equity Laws.



# A DREAMer's Reality: Financial Obstacles

Currently, DREAMers have scarce resources for funding a college education. DREAMers cannot qualify for federal and most State-based financial aid. Without financial aid, the costs of attending a college can be a complete barrier.



## In-State Tuition & Financial Aid

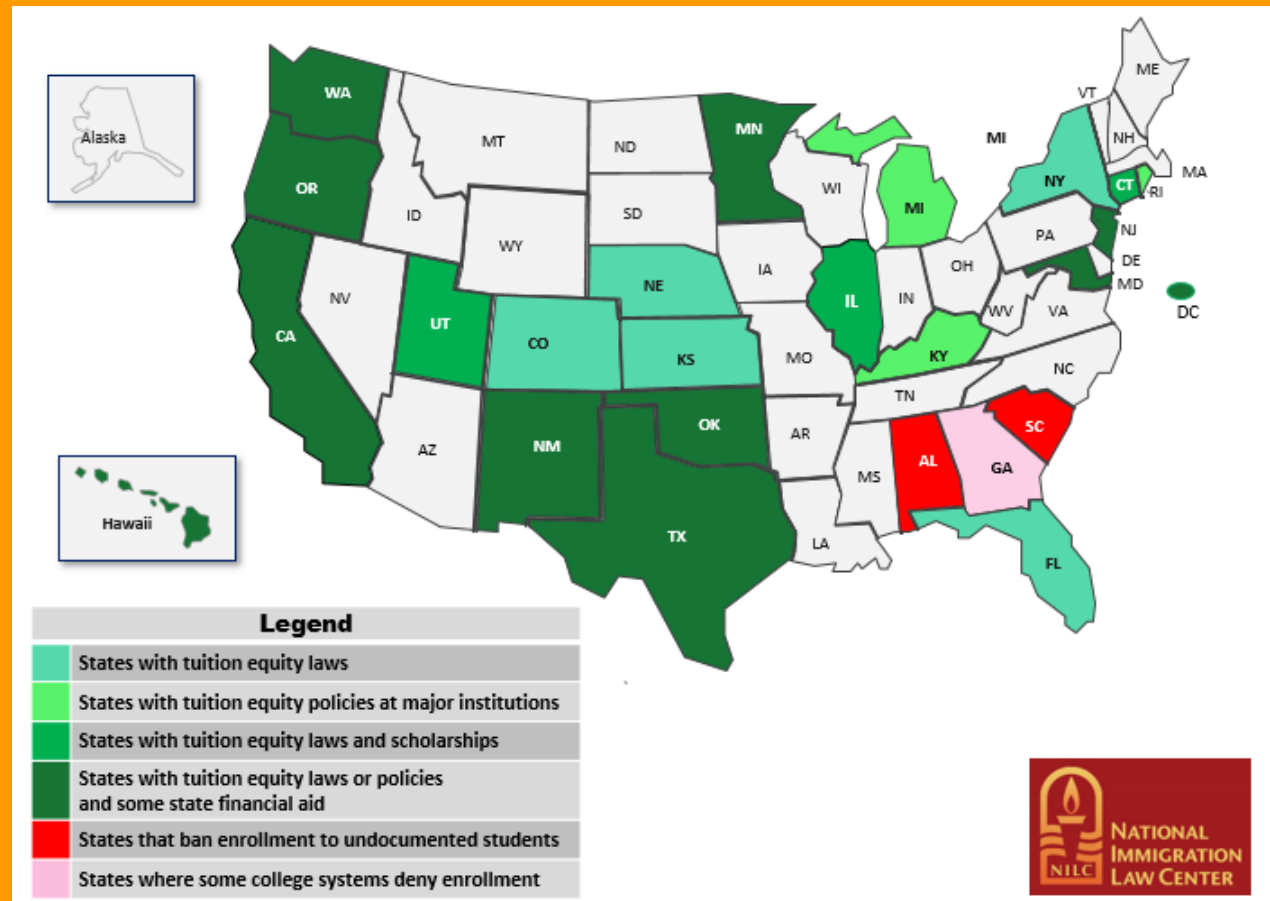
Only about twenty states offer In-State Tuition for DREAMers who graduate from a high school in that State. To receive In-State Tuition, undocumented students must reside in the State, attend high school for a specified period (1-4 years) in the State, and graduate or receive their GED in State. In addition to allowing students to qualify for In-State Tuition some States provide undocumented students access to State Financial Aid.



## Private Colleges and Universities

DREAMers can apply to private universities with friendly admission policies for undocumented students, but funding has always been limited. Almost all private colleges and universities classify undocumented students as "international students" and consider their financial background in determining admissions. In this process, undocumented students compete with students from every country in the world for a handful of enrollment slots. For these schools, an undocumented student's ability to fund their entire four years of college is considered in admissions decisions. Because of these policies, many qualified and competitive undocumented students are denied admission to private colleges every year.

# State Laws on State Financial Equity and State Financial Aid for DREAMers



Currently, at least **twenty States** and the District of Columbia have laws or policies allowing students who meet specific requirements, regardless of their immigration status, to pay **In-State Tuition** rates at public postsecondary institutions.

At least **ten States** provide access to **State Financial Aid** to students who meet certain criteria, regardless of their immigration status

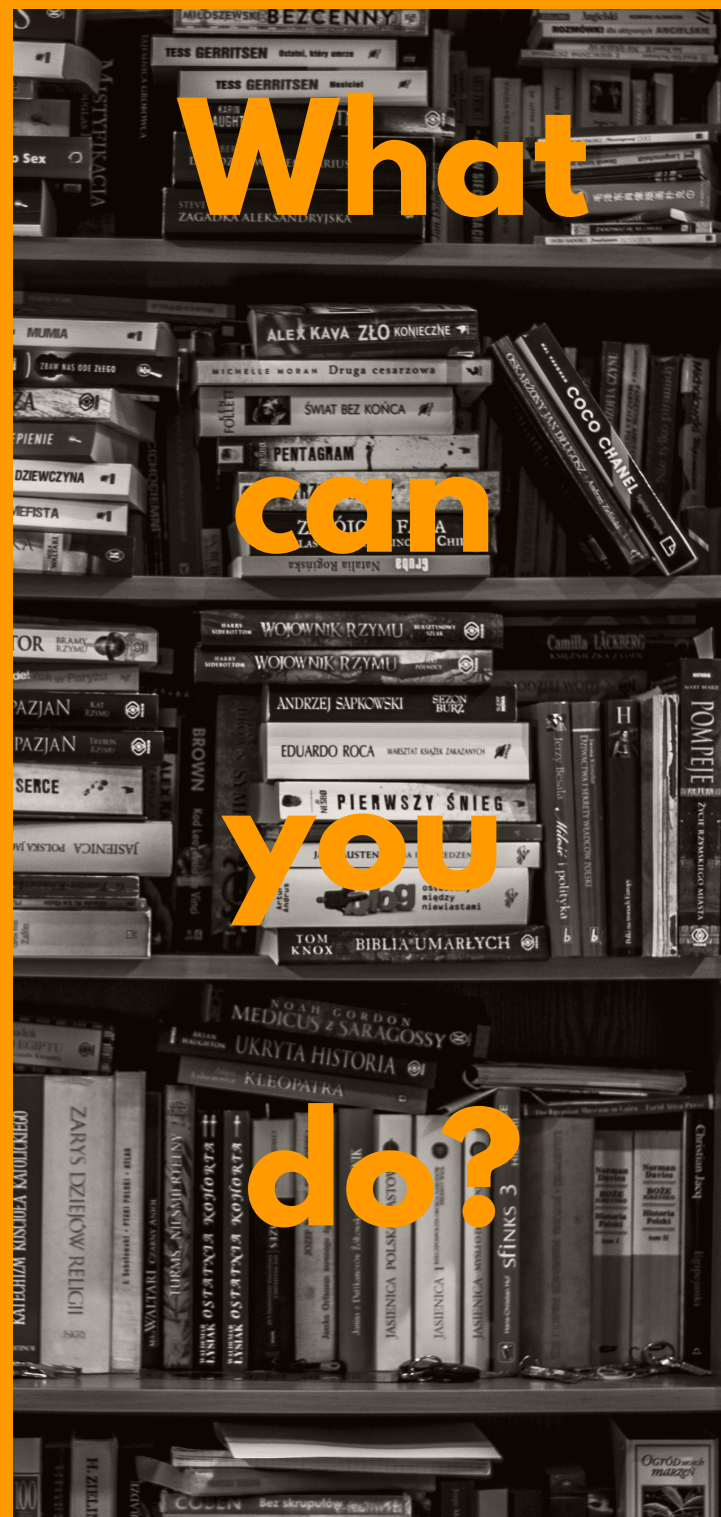
For up-to-date information visit <https://uleadnet.org/>



- ✓ **Contact** your **alma mater**! Ask what their policies are, and if they have scholarships for undocumented students
- ✓ **Encourage** your **alma mater** to conduct an audit of their financial aid policies and drop the "**citizenship**" requirement for their scholarships
- ✓ **Request** that your **alma mater** set up a **scholarship fund** for undocumented students with a community partner or with another non-profit **community foundation**
- ✓ Depending on State Laws, some schools may also be able to issue **tuition waivers** for undocumented students, especially if that State does not have Tuition Equity Laws. Many schools issue tuition waivers for student athletes and this can be replicated with DREAMers

**TIP:**

***State schools** can offer privately funded scholarships to undocumented students through a non-profit even if that State does not allow State financial aid*



# Opening more Scholarship funds for DREAMers: The private market

- ✓ Inform your clients who donate directly or indirectly to scholarship funds to verify that the funds are inclusive to DREAMers by not requiring applicants to be U.S. citizens.
- ✓ Contact local organizations that manage scholarships and inform them of the importance of dropping any "citizenship" requirement to privately funded scholarships.
- ✓ Make sure your allies and community partners spread the word about scholarships that are already inclusive of DREAMers.

## TIP:

*Private funds or scholarships can be geared toward community colleges or State institutions, which can be more affordable for DREAMers. Encourage private donors to donate to scholarships that will fund more affordable educational institutions.*





# Educating Yourself

Scholarship Programs Classify Citizenship in 3 ways:

- **Silent but Assumed** – not excluded, but just assumed that applicant should be U.S. Citizen
- **Copy and Paste** – excluded but no one knows why
- **Intentional Exclusion** – truly intended to exclude undocumented immigrant youth

*Unless a program intentionally excludes undocumented youth, the program should be open to changing their citizenship requirements*



# Common Misconceptions

Fear: It is unlawful to award scholarships to undocumented immigrant students.

Answer: There is little to no legal support for this position and no organization or person has ever faced criminal penalties for supporting DREAMers.

Fear: Political fallout

Answer: Many Americans and other groups have been supportive of DREAMers and there is partisan support for this issue. Additionally, 86% of Americans support work opportunities for immigrants brought here as children and 79% favor granting US citizenship.

Fox News Poll (Sept 2017)

Fear: DREAMers will not be able to find legal employment

Answer: Many DREAMers are entrepreneurial and can build businesses. Every version of a DREAM Act to go before Congress has required college education or military service in order to be on the path to citizenship. The more DREAMers we can fund now, the more DREAMers who will be on their way to be contributing citizens of this country.

Fear: Donors will not support raising funds for DREAMers

Answer: TheDream.US has raised over \$200M for scholarship aid for DREAMers. Additionally Americans overwhelmingly support DREAMers that want to attend higher education and give back to society. Once donors are educated on the stories of DREAMers many will be more inclined to donate.

