



MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND

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AB 540 is a Change in the Law: Higher Education Is Now More Affordable For California's Immigrant Students

AB 540 Requirements

Since January 1, 2002, California's AB 540 allows qualified immigrant students to pay in-state tuition fees. Immigrant students cannot be denied access to colleges or universities but were asked to pay much higher tuition costs in the past. With AB 540, students attending public colleges and universities (Community College, CSU, and UC) pay the in-state tuition. Private colleges and universities like Heald, ITT Tech, Bryman, USC, and Pasadena Art Institute do NOT fall under AB 540.

California's immigrant students are eligible for this exemption if they meet the law's requirements. In order to qualify for AB 540, a student must:

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| <p>1. Have attended a high school in <u>California</u> for 3 years or more (adult school students may qualify depending on the college/university);
AND</p> | <p>2. Have graduated from a California high school or received the equivalent of (GED); AND</p> | <p>3. File an affidavit with the public state college or university stating that he or she will file an application to obtain legal permanent residency as soon as he or she is eligible.</p> |
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Cost Difference

In the past, immigrant students were charged the out-of-state tuition but AB 540 allows qualified students to pay the in-state tuition instead. The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition is significant:

California Community Colleges

\$26/unit (in-state) \$197/unit (out-of-state)

California State University

\$2,864 (in-state) \$12,420 (out-of-state)

University of California

\$6,141 (in-state) \$22,504 (out-of-state)

Confidentiality

AB 540 requires that state colleges and universities keep student information confidential. A student's immigration status cannot and will not be reported to immigration officials or any other third party.

Immigration Concerns

- Immigrant students who have questions about legal residency should consult an immigration attorney.
- Making false statements about your immigration status creates serious legal problems. If you have made false statements in the past, consult with an immigration attorney immediately.
- Contact your local bar association for referrals to licensed immigration attorneys. Beware of immigration fraud and consult at least two immigration attorneys.

Financial Aid

- Immigrant 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 immigrant students.
- Students who need financial assistance should ask a school counselor for referrals to scholarships or other types of loans that do not require legal permanent Residency, social security number, or U.S. citizenship.
- Also check our website, www.maldef.org, for a list of private scholarships.