



Student Residency

OVERVIEW

Students who meet student residency requirements are eligible for resident tuition and fees at public colleges and universities in Washington State.

The Washington Student Achievement Council:

- Adopts residency rules for tuition and fee purposes.
- Sets guidelines for all public colleges and universities to follow.
- Advises residency officers and financial aid officers on residency decisions.

Laws & Rules

RCW 28B.15.011–015

WAC 250-18

DETERMINING RESIDENCY

Each school has a residency officer who uses state laws, rules, and guidelines to decide if students are residents or nonresidents for tuition and fee purposes. Students with residency questions should contact the school's residency officer. Residency officers are usually located in the registrar's or admissions office.



TUITION

Washington's public colleges and universities may charge different tuition rates depending on a student's residency. Nonresident tuition and fees can cost more than twice as much as the tuition and fees paid by Washington residents.



FINANCIAL AID

Residency requirements for state financial aid programs may be different than residency requirements for tuition and fees. U.S. citizens and non-citizens who meet certain residency criteria may qualify for state financial aid programs like the Washington State Need Grant and the College Bound Scholarship. Funds from these financial aid programs can be used at participating public and private colleges and universities in Washington. Students should contact their financial aid office to find out if they qualify for state financial aid programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

residency@wsac.wa.gov | 360.753.7800

QUALIFYING FOR RESIDENCY

There are several ways to qualify for resident tuition and fees at Washington's public colleges and universities, but most students fall into one of these two categories:

Financially independent students: These are students who pay their own tuition and living expenses. They must have a domicile in the state for at least one year, for purposes other than educational, before their first term.

Financially dependent students: These are students who do not pay their own tuition and living expenses, or are claimed as a dependent on someone else's taxes, regardless of age. Their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must have a domicile in the state for at least one year immediately before the student's first term.

What is a domicile?

Domicile is a legal term used to describe a person's true, fixed, and permanent home. To establish a domicile in Washington, a person must prove physical presence in the state, plus intent to permanently reside in the state.

Common forms of proof of domicile include a Washington driver's license, vehicle registration, and voter registration.

RESIDENCY FOR SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

Residency rules can be complicated. For additional details on the circumstances described below, please visit www.wsac.wa.gov/student-residency.

Undocumented students and other non-citizens: Most students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents cannot qualify for resident tuition. There are some exceptions, including any student who graduated from a Washington high school and meets other requirements under House Bill 1079. Other exceptions include students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status or with a certain visa or immigration status who also meet other residency requirements.

House Bill 1079: This bill allows any student, including undocumented students and other non-citizens, to pay resident tuition if they meet all of the following conditions:

1. Finished the full senior year of high school at, and earned a diploma from, a Washington high school OR got a GED or equivalent.
2. Lived in Washington for 36 continuous months immediately prior to earning high school diploma or equivalent.
3. Lived in Washington after earning diploma or equivalent until being admitted to college.

Military, veterans, and dependents: Washington's residency laws support veterans, active duty military members, and their dependents. For example, active duty military members stationed in Washington and their spouses or dependents qualify for resident tuition, as do certain veterans and their spouses or dependents. See our website for more ways to qualify.

Other specific populations: Special residency rules apply to some students who meet requirements related to:

- Being from an Oregon county that borders Washington.
- Belonging to a federally recognized tribe whose traditional and customary tribal boundaries included portions of Washington State.
- Being from certain Pacific Islands.

