



Tip Sheet for Refugee and Asylee Students



Refugee and asylee students face unique challenges in their quests to obtain postsecondary education. This tip sheet provides answers to pressing questions that can assist refugee and asylee students in determining if enrollment in postsecondary education is possible.

Question	Answer
1. What do I need from the Department of Homeland Security to receive financial aid as a refugee or asylee student?	To be eligible to receive federal financial aid, you must first receive an approved status-designation of either "Refugee" or "Asylee" on your Arrival-Departure Record (I-94).
2. My application for refugee or asylee status with the Department of Homeland Security is in process, but I am sure I will be approved. Can I receive financial aid?	You may start the college application process including the FAFSA application; but until you receive your official designation status from the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS), you may not receive any federal student aid disbursements.
3. Can I receive in-state tuition as a refugee or asylee student?	For financial aid purposes, most state-funded institutions have in-state residency requirements to qualify for in-state tuition. You should research each state's laws with respect to how "residency" or like concepts are measured.
4. I cannot obtain my parent's financial information for the FAFSA application because they are displaced and I don't know how to contact them. How does this affect my FAFSA application?	If you are asked for parent financial information but cannot obtain it because your family is displaced due to upheaval in your home country, you may be prompted to provide proof to document your situation. If you have a contact within the US who can confirm your current situation, (i.e. another family member already in the country), your financial aid administrator (FAA) can ask for that family member or person to either appear in person and sign a statement confirming your account or have them send the aid office a notarized statement. With review and approval of documentation, the FAA may then complete a dependency override allowing you to access federal financial aid as an independent student. You must add your Alien Registration Number (ARN) on the FAFSA application.
5. I can't obtain a copy of my high school diploma or equivalent; what can I do to prove I am eligible to attend college and receive financial aid?	To prove that you've received a high school diploma if you are unable to obtain one because of upheaval in your home country, you must furnish the following items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proof of your attempt to obtain documentation of completion of a secondary school education in a foreign country, i.e., a copy of an e-mail or letter, including proof of mailing; 2. A signed and dated statement that indicates that you completed your secondary school education in a foreign country, the name and address of the foreign high school where you completed the secondary school education, and the date when your foreign high school diploma was awarded.

Question	Answer
5. (continued)	3. If applicable: A copy of the entry status documentation that identifies your current or prior status as a refugee or an asylee and that you entered the United States after the age of 15.
6. If I can document eligible non-citizen status, what other options besides federal student loans can I receive to help fund my education and related expenses?	After completing the FAFSA, you may be eligible to receive a Pell Grant and/or FSEOG (Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant). Both are need-based grants that are dependent upon the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is calculated from the information you supplied on your FAFSA application. You may also be able to take advantage of federal work-study programs. Depending on your financial credit history, you may be able to apply for a private loan. There are also some private scholarships available for refugee or asylee students, as well as institutions that offer non-citizen status specific scholarships. Checking with your institution's financial aid office is the best place to start.
7. Can I use my federal student aid and scholarship money to pay expenses other than tuition?	Federal student aid and scholarships can be used to pay most educational expenses, including but not limited to: tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, the cost of a computer, and personal expenses including transportation. You should check with any organization that awards you a scholarship about restrictions on its use.
8. Where can I look to find private scholarships as a refugee or asylee student?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://therefugeecenter.org/resources/scholarships-for-refugees/ • https://scholarmatch.org/ • https://www.fastweb.com/