



Illinois DREAM Act

What is Illinois DREAM Act?

The Illinois DREAM Act, which borrows its name from a similar piece of federal legislation, is a state law that supports the college aspiration of children of immigrants in Illinois. The Act was signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn on August 1, 2011. Before heading to Governor Quinn's desk for approval, the bill was passed in the state Senate and in the state House.

What will the Illinois DREAM Act provide?

The Illinois DREAM Act was designed to make four major provisions in support of children of immigrants in Illinois:

- **Appoint an Illinois DREAM Commission**

To carry out the responsibilities outlined under the Illinois DREAM Act, a nine-member Commission will be appointed by the Governor with Senate consent. Members of the Commission will represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of the State, including students, college and university administrators and faculty, and other individuals committed to advancing the educational opportunities of the children of immigrants. Individuals with an interest in serving on the DREAM Fund Commission may learn more about the Commissioners' duties and submit nomination forms at <http://appointments.illinois.gov/appointmentsDetail.cfm?id=417>.

- **Establish an Illinois DREAM Fund**

The Fund will be funded entirely from private contributions to provide financial assistance to support the postsecondary aspiration of children of immigrants in Illinois.

- **Amend Section 529 Prepaid and Savings Plans**

The option to invest in the state's 529 college savings (Bright Start and Bright Directions) and 529 prepaid tuition (College Illinois) programs will become available to the children of immigrants, including undocumented students, who graduate from Illinois high schools. A Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or social security number (SSN) are required.

To learn about 529 prepaid tuition (College Illinois), go to www.collegeillinois.org; and for 529 college savings (Bright Start and Bright Directions), go to www.brightdirections.com.

- **Require Professional Development for School Personnel**

To address the need for guidance on matters of postsecondary options, the Act requires high school counselors and college admission and financial aid officers to be trained on educational opportunities for immigrant youth.

What is the role of the Illinois DREAM Commission?

The Illinois DREAM Commission is charged with all of the following responsibilities:

- raise monetary contributions for the Illinois DREAM Fund;
- establish a not-for-profit entity to administer the Fund;
- publicize the availability of scholarships;
- select recipients of scholarship awards;
- research issues pertaining to college *access and success* among the children of immigrants;
- develop and administer training programs for high school counselors and admissions and financial aid staff that instruct participants on the educational opportunities available to college-bound students who are the children of immigrants; and
- establish procedures to accept and evaluate scholarship applications; and to issue scholarships to selected student applicants.

When will the Illinois DREAM Fund be available?

As of this publication's print date, a date has not been specified for when the Illinois DREAM Fund will become available. Details about a prospective time frame will become available soon after the nine-member Illinois DREAM Commission is appointed. They will be charged with raising monetary contributions for the fund and will establish procedures to receive applications, select recipients, and distribute funds – among other responsibilities.

More information about the Illinois DREAM Commission and Illinois DREAM Fund will be posted on the official website of the State of Illinois (www.Illinois.gov). Updates and resources will also be added to the website of the *Office of Pathways to College and Careers* at Chicago Public Schools (www.chooseyourfuture.org). In the meantime, students and families seeking assistance may wish to visit the Web page of the *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights* (www.ICIRR.org) to access a guide for undocumented students in Illinois.

(Note: As of this publication's print date, ICIRR guides and resources are not commissioned by the Illinois DREAM Commission, are not produced by the State of Illinois, and neither the State nor Illinois Student Assistance Commission is responsible for their content.)

Who qualifies for a scholarship under the Illinois DREAM Act?

To receive a scholarship under the *Illinois DREAM Fund*, a students will have to meet the same requirements that currently apply to receiving an in-state tuition rate at public universities in Illinois:

- have at least one parent who immigrated to the U.S.;
- lived with a parent or guardian while going to high school in Illinois;
- graduated from an Illinois high school or received a GED; and
- must have attended school in Illinois for at least three years before graduating or receiving a GED certificate.

Is there a federal DREAM Act?

No. The Federal Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act has not been signed into law. It is a legislative proposal first introduced on August 1, 2001 to the U.S. Senate and most recently on May 11, 2011. Members of Congress have introduced several forms of this bill in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Federal DREAM Act continues to attract bipartisan support.

Who can I contact to learn more about the Illinois DREAM Act?

Illinois General Assembly

Bill Status of SB2185

www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2185&GAID=11&GA=97&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=58384&SessionID=84

Public Act 097-0233

www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/97/PDF/097-0233.pdf

State of Illinois, Office of the Governor

www.Illinois.gov

Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Office of Government Relations

ISAC State Legislative Updates

www.collegezone.com/elibrary/2290_2567.htm

Chicago Public Schools, Office of Pathways to College and Careers

www.chooseyourfuture.org/college/undocumented-students

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

www.icirr.org