



# PICC Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day



## BENEFITS OF IN-STATE TUITION EQUITY

*In-state tuition equity policy will provide the opportunity for all students who have attended high school in Pennsylvania and received a diploma or GED certificate, to pay in-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth regardless of their immigration status.*

- **In-State Tuition Equity Provides A Way For Students To Continue Their Education.** In-state tuition equity provides an incentive for students to finish high school and pursue higher education. More college graduates contribute to faster economic growth.<sup>1</sup> Graduates with even a two-year degree tend to earn more than those with just a high school diploma.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the unemployment rate for college graduates is far lower than the rate for those with only a high school education.<sup>3</sup>
- **Twenty States Provide In-State Tuition Equity.** Twenty states allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities. Support for in-state tuition equity in other states has been strongly bipartisan, with legislators voting overwhelmingly in favor of the legislation.<sup>4</sup>
- **In-State Tuition Equity Benefits Pennsylvania's Economy.** Immigrants encompass a critical component of Pennsylvania's business community and labor force, especially in the healthcare sector. With in-state tuition equity, undocumented students would contribute more to Pennsylvania by being employed in higher-skilled jobs, which translates into paying more taxes and spending more money as consumers.
- **In-State Tuition Equity Encourages Young People To Stay In Pennsylvania.** Pennsylvania needs to implement public policies that encourage young immigrants to stay in the Commonwealth to remain economically competitive. Nationally, Pennsylvania ranks fourth in percentage of the population age 65 and over. The rate of population growth is well below the national average. In-state tuition equity helps keep young and talented immigrants in Pennsylvania by providing an incentive for them to stay.
- **Pennsylvania Already Invests In K-12 Education For Undocumented Youth.** Pennsylvania already invests resources in the primary and secondary educations of undocumented students. In the landmark case of *Plyer v. Doe* (1982), the Supreme Court found that K-12 education was a fundamental right that had to be provided to all children, regardless of immigration status. With college degrees, these students will be able to contribute substantially more in taxes and help support their families.
- **Pennsylvania State Schools Support This Legislation.** Several Pennsylvania state schools, including the 14 universities that make up the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), already allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates if they meet certain criteria, but such practices are not uniform. In-state tuition equity legislation would announce a clear and uniform in-state tuition equity policy to be implemented at all public institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania.
- **In-State Tuition Equity Is Not Enough To Bridge The Inequality Gap.** Providing access to state financial aid is crucial to eliminating the barriers to accessing higher education. According to estimates, a four-year degree at a public university in Pennsylvania can cost students \$72,000, *in addition* to the cost of tuition. Currently, undocumented students are not eligible to receive any federally or state funded student financial aid, including loans, grants, scholarships, or work-study money. Additionally, undocumented students face substantial barriers to obtaining private loans. State legislation providing undocumented students access to state financial aid is the most efficient way to bridge this inequality gap in Pennsylvania. Five states already offer state financial aid to undocumented students: Texas, California, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Washington.

<sup>1</sup> Peter R. Orszag, *More College Grads Equals Faster Economic Growth*, BLOOMBERG (Feb. 12, 2013, 6:30 PM)

<sup>2</sup> Jaison R. Abel, Richard Deitz, and Yaqin Su, *Do the Benefits of College Still Outweigh the Costs?*, 20 *Current Issues Econ. & Fin.*, 1, 2-3 (2014).

<sup>3</sup> Emily Hanford, *The Value of a College Degree*.

<sup>4</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, *Tuition Benefits for Immigrants*. States with in-state tuition equity policies: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington.