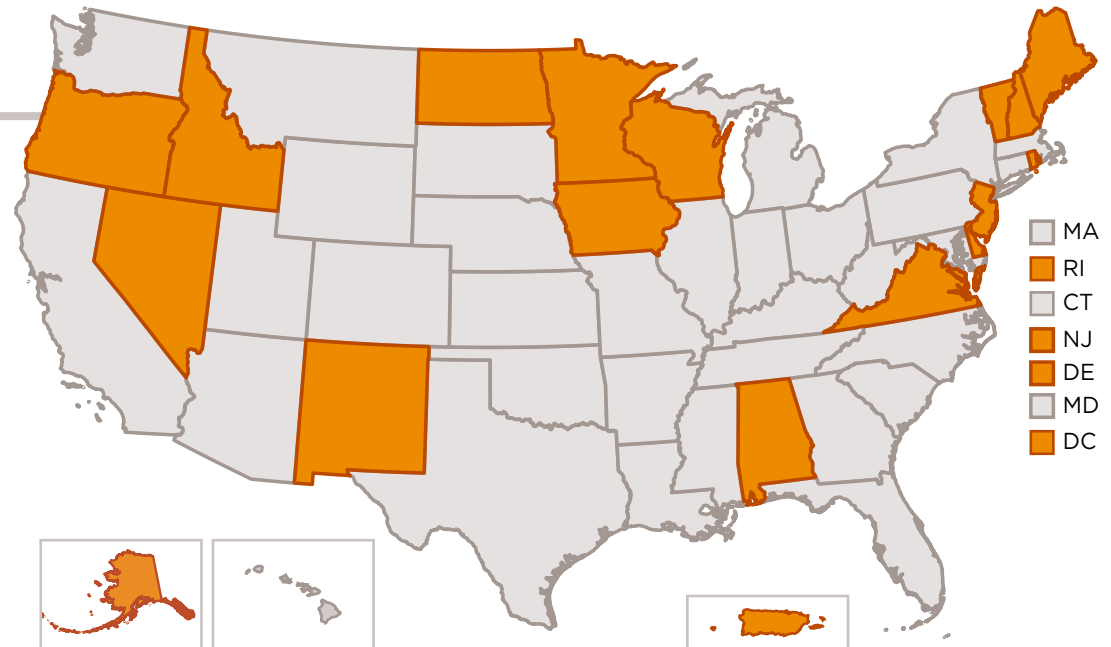



State Financial Aid Barriers for Students IMPACTED BY THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

States where system-impacted students are eligible for state financial aid.



State governments have a long history of supporting residents with financial aid grants for college. In 2016-17, states awarded 4 million grants, totaling almost \$11 billion, to students. But some populations of people are unable to get state aid. In most states, people who are impacted by the criminal justice system are ineligible for financial aid grant programs. Eligibility barriers exist in state statutes, administrative regulations and agency practices. Incarcerated students and students with certain drug-related convictions are most commonly excluded from state aid programs. In these states, system-impacted students must use other funding sources to pay for college.

KEY TERM

 **System-impacted** students are people enrolled in prison postsecondary education programs or people with prior criminal convictions enrolled in postsecondary education programs outside of prison.

KEY FINDINGS

Students impacted by the justice system are ineligible for at least **54** of the **100** largest state aid programs.

19 of the **52** U.S. states and jurisdictions place no restrictions on eligibility for system-impacted students in either of their two largest financial aid grant programs.

The eligibility rules of **19 state programs** are tied to eligibility for Pell Grants, making system-impacted students ineligible by default.

STATE EXAMPLES

State policies and programmatic approaches provide opportunities and financial resources beyond aid for system-impacted students.



CALIFORNIA

California adopted [S.B. 1391](#) in 2014 that allowed community colleges to provide face-to-face education and training in correctional facilities. [Funding sources](#) include general apportionment for full-time equivalent students, student equity sources and other state-supported grants. California State University, Los Angeles offers a four-year, in-person program for system-impacted students; it is funded through a combination of Pell Grants and private grants.



INDIANA

Indiana provides [vocational programs](#) to system-impacted students in department of correction facilities through Next Level Jobs Indiana and [The Last Mile](#). Funding for student access is provided by the state adult education grant and private sources.

POLICY ACTION

Policy leaders in several states have taken actions to revise bans on financial aid for system-impacted students.

P.A.
62

In **Michigan**, [P.A. 62](#), among other adjustments, restored incarcerated students' access to the [Tuition Incentive Program](#), the state's largest financial aid program.

S.B.
2055/
A.B. 699

In **New Jersey**, [S.B. 2055/A.B. 699](#) restored incarcerated students' access to all state financial aid programs.

H.B. 30/
S.B. 299

H.B. 512/
S.B. 1362

In **Tennessee**, [H.B. 30/S.B. 299](#) would have restored incarcerated students' access to the [Tennessee Reconnect Program](#), and [H.B. 512/S.B. 1362](#) would have restored incarcerated students' access to all state financial aid programs. None of the bills passed.



RESOURCES

- 50-State Comparison: [State Financial Aid Barriers for Students Impacted by the Justice System](#)
- 50-State Comparison: [Need- and Merit-Based Financial Aid](#)

Education Commission
of the States

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This information in this resource is provided by Bradley D. Custer, author of "[The Disenfranchisement of Justice-Involved College Students from State Financial Aid.](#)"