

NEW MAINERS

WELCOME



IF YOU ARE NEW TO MAINE as an immigrant, refugee, new resident or new citizen, you may have questions about the education system in the United States, such as how to pay for college, whether you qualify for financial aid and if your existing credential(s) will be accepted for work or school.

Using Your Existing Degree

Do you have an existing degree or certificate from your home country? You may be able to use it in the United States for work or schooling. You may need to have your degree or certificate reviewed by an objective third party to see which degree is similar when using United States standards. This is called **Credential Evaluation**. Decide if you want your credential evaluated and who you want to evaluate it. Choose who will review your degree or certificate depending on how you will use it.

Schooling. Every school may have different requirements for credential evaluation. Start by speaking with the school you want to attend. The school's admissions or international students office should be able to offer more information about their requirements.

Work. It may not be necessary to obtain a credential evaluation. Talk to people in your industry and employers to learn more about their requirements. If you have a credential evaluation, list it clearly on your resume. If you do not, list your degree on your resume.

License requirements vary from state to state. Before you have your degree or certificate reviewed for a professional license, confirm the requirements of the professional board in your state.

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FAMEmaine.com

Earning a High School Degree

In order to attend college in the United States you must have a high school diploma or equivalent. In Maine, the HiSET exam is used to award a Maine High School Equivalency Diploma. Eighty-four Adult Education programs across Maine offer free HiSET preparation and testing services. Find an Adult Education program near you at maineadulted.org.

Preparing for College

Maine College Transitions offers career planning, academic preparation, financial aid help, college planning and admissions testing. Find a Maine College Transitions Program near you at mainecollegetransitions.org.

Paying for College

Students in the United States pay for college by using financial aid, savings and income. Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, loans and work study. Financial aid is offered by the United States federal government, individual states, colleges and universities, community groups and some employers. Federal financial aid includes grants and loans. Maine offers the State of Maine Grant. Federal financial aid and the State of Maine Grant are awarded through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (referred to as the FAFSA).

To be eligible for federal student aid you must be:

- A U.S. citizen, or
- A U.S. permanent resident or an individual who has an arrival-departure record (I-94) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services showing one of the following:
 - Refugee
 - Asylum Granted
 - Cuban-Haitian Entrant
 - Parolee

If you are not eligible for federal student aid, there are other ways to pay for college. Asylum seekers and undocumented Mainers are not eligible to receive federal financial aid or the State of Maine Grant. However there are other ways to pay for college:

- Many employers offer education benefits such as reimbursement for tuition or scholarships. See your human resource office to see if your employer offers this benefit.
- Pay for courses as you can until your immigration status changes and you become eligible for federal financial aid.
- There are scholarships that asylum seekers and undocumented Mainers can apply for.

