

How to Establish California Residency at Santa Monica College for Tuition Purposes

A Presentation By the Office of Admissions & Records

What is Residency?

- ▶ When you apply to any California Community College, the school is required to classify you as either **Resident**, or a **Nonresident**.
- ▶ Your residency classification is based on a variety of factors such as your address, educational history, citizenship status, and how long you have lived in California.
- ▶ Resident tuition prices are offered to students who have established residency in California more than one year prior to the semester they are attending. Non-Resident students are charged an increased cost per unit when enrolling.
- ▶ Simply attending college is not enough to establish residency, students must demonstrate a combination of **physical presence**, **intent** to remain in California, and **financial independence** from out of state parents or guardians.
- ▶ Your residency status determines the price you pay per unit:
Summer/Fall 2025 California Resident Enrollment Fee: \$46 per unit
Summer/Fall 2025 Nonresident Tuition Rate: \$444 per unit**

**Combination of Nonresident tuition, nonresident surcharges, and enrollment fees

... but I'm from California!

- ▶ Any out of state activity indicated within the last two years on the CCCApply application will trigger a non-resident determination upon Admission - which means students from California who left temporarily to attend an out of state university will likely be admitted as a non-resident after applying.
- ▶ Students who fall into this category will have to provide proof that they did not take additional steps to establish residency in the other state while attending college, such as providing a tuition statement showing you were charged as a non-resident in that other state.
- ▶ Students who attended and completed school in California, but left to another state, may be eligible for a temporary non-resident tuition exemption upon returning (also known as AB-540). The AB-540 Affidavit can be accessed online at www.smc.edu/Forms, high school transcript showing a minimum of three year of attendance and graduation from a California school are required.

I have been admitted as a nonresident, can that be changed?

- ▶ Yes! Students can have their residency status adjusted up until the start of the semester they are attending by submitting a Residency Classification Questionnaire.
- ▶ You can find the Residency Classification Questionnaire online at www.smc.edu/Forms - click 'Student Forms' and select the Residency Questionnaire, you will be required to log in to your SMC network account to access the form.
- ▶ The Questionnaire will ask you several questions regarding where you have lived, worked, voted, filed taxes, attended college, as well as your citizenship status and any financial dependence with out of state parents or guardians.
- ▶ At the end of the questionnaire you will be asked to upload supporting documentation showing that you have resided in California more than one year from the start of the semester you are attending. **Students who are 19 years or older at the start of the semester must provide documents in their own name**, students who are under the age of 19 at the start of the semester should provide their parent's information and documents.

Required Documentation

Simply attending college in California DOES NOT satisfy residency requirements!

- ▶ To establish California Residency for tuition purposes the student must provide a minimum of three documents to the Admissions and Records Office, with one from each document category - **Physical Presence, Intent, and Financial Independence.**
- ▶ The documents from each category must be dated at least **one year and one day** from the start of the semester you are seeking to become a resident.

Example:

Summer 2025 begins **June 23rd 2025**

Summer 2025 documents must be dated on or before **June 22nd 2024**

Fall 2025 begins **September 2nd 2025**

Fall 2025 documents must be dated on or before **September 1st 2024**

- ▶ Students who are 19 years of age or older at the start of the semester must provide documentation in their name. Students who are below the age of 19 at the start of the semester should provide their parent's documents.
- ▶ Don't put it off! Taking the initiative to establishing residency when you first move to California could save you thousands of dollars down the road.

Acceptable Documents

- ▶ Remember: You need to provide a minimum of three separate sets of documents, with one from each area.
- ▶ Although a single document may satisfy multiple areas, it only counts as one document. You are required to provide three separate documents.

Ex: California Tax returns can be used to meet any of the three areas, but you would still be required to provide two additional documents.

Documentation that may be used to satisfy residency factors	Physical Presence	Intent	Financial Independence
<i>The ideal combination of documents to support your residency request is: California Resident Taxes for the immediate past tax year + Valid California Identification or Driver's License + utility bills (provided there are no other nonresidency indicators).</i>			
<i>Documents listed in order of precedence</i>			
Filed California Income Tax (Form 540, page 1-2 as submitted to the Franchise Tax Board) with California address. If filed for an extension, a copy of the IRS tax extension receipt is needed along with a copy of your W-2 for that year.	X	X	X
California Driver's License or California ID card or DMV printout	X	X	
California Vehicle Registration—California Registration Certificate	X	X	
California Voter's Registration Card		X	
Official license from California Department of Consumer Affairs for Business or Individual practice	X	X	
California Bank Checking Account Statements showing a California Mailing Address with most transactions in California (need 2 statements: one from the past 3 months, one from 12 - 13 months ago)	X		X
Marriage License or Divorce Decree issued in California with a California Mailing Address	X	X	
Paycheck stubs or letter of employment verification on company letterhead with dates of employment noted, signed by the Human Resources manager	X		X
Receipt of Benefits from a California State Agency	X	X	X
Documentation of purchase and occupancy of residential real estate in California – loan papers, tax receipts, escrow paper	X	X	X
Selective Service Registration showing California Permanent Address	X	X	
California Utility Bills (e.g., electricity, phone, or water) covering a one-year period (need 2 statements: one from the past 3 months, one from 12 - 13 months ago)	X		X
California Health Insurance or Medi-Cal ID with Effective Date	X		
DD-214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Military Duty) or copy of LES (Leave and Earning Statement) indicating California as State of Record	X	X	X
W-2 Form with a California home address—only if taxes not filed	X		X
California property taxes	X	X	X
Union membership in a California local	X		

Tax Returns: 540 vs 1040

California Return 540 

2017 California Resident Income Tax Return **540**

Fiscal year filers only: Enter month of year end: month year 2018. ☐ Check here if this is an AMENDED return.

Your first name Initial Last name Suffix Your SSN or ITIN

If joint tax return, spouse's first name Initial Last name Suffix Spouse's/RDP's SSN or ITIN

Additional information (see instructions) PBA code

Street address (number and street) or PO box Apt. no./ste. no. PMB/private mailbox

City (If you have a foreign address, see instructions) State ZIP code

Foreign country name Foreign province/state/county Foreign postal code

Federal Return 1040 

1040 Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service (99) **2020** OMB No. 1545-0047 IRS Use Only—Do not write or staple in this space.

Filing Status ☐ Single ☐ Married filing jointly ☐ Married filing separately (MFS) ☐ Head of household (HOH) ☐ Qualifying widow(er) (QW)
Check only one box. If you checked the MFS box, enter the name of your spouse. If you checked the HOH or QW box, enter the child's name if the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent ▶

Your first name and middle initial Last name Your social security number

If joint return, spouse's first name and middle initial Last name Spouse's social security number

Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see instructions. Apt. no. Presidential Election Campaign
City, town, or post office. If you have a foreign address, also complete spaces below. State ZIP code Check here if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, want \$3 to go to this fund. Checking a box below will not change your tax or refund.
☐ Yes ☐ No

Foreign country name Foreign province/state/county Foreign postal code

At any time during 2020, did you receive, sell, send, exchange, or otherwise acquire any financial interest in any virtual currency? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Standard Deduction Someone can claim: ☐ You as a dependent ☐ Your spouse as a dependent ☐ Spouse itemizes on a separate return or you were a dual-status alien

Age/Blindness You: ☐ Were born before January 2, 1956 ☐ Are blind Spouse: ☐ Was born before January 2, 1956 ☐ Is blind

Dependents (see instructions):

(1) First name	Last name	(2) Social security number	(3) Relationship to you	(4) ☒ If qualifies for (see instructions): Child tax credit	Credit for other dependents
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐

Financial Independence

- ▶ The State of California has laid out very specific definitions of what they determine to be Financial Independence, failure to meet the requirements will result in a denial of your Residency Questionnaire.
- ▶ Tax Dependency: Being claimed on Federal or State taxes by a parent or guardian that resides outside of the state of California will result in an automatic nonresident determination. Speak to your parents now so that they are aware of this and do not claim you on future tax filings.
- ▶ Yearly Financial Contributions: Receiving \$750 from an out of state parent or guardian is considered financial dependence and will result in an automatic nonresident determination.
- ▶ For purposes of establishing residency, we will be scrutinizing the last year leading up to the term you seeking reclassification.

Citizenship Status Requirements

- ▶ You do NOT need to be a US citizen to establish California Residency so long as you are in the country under a status that allows you to establish residency
- ▶ Permanent residents, people seeking asylum or refugee status, DACA recipients, as well as a variety of immigrant visas are eligible to establish California Residency
- ▶ You will be asked to fill in your citizenship status information on the Residency Classification Questionnaire and to attach copies of the applicable citizenship documents along with your Proofs of California Residency - Evidence of approved status more than one year prior to start of semester is required.
- ▶ If your immigration case is under review please provide a clear photo or scan of your passport (entry stamps and Visas), along with any filing paperwork, so our Specialists can fully review your eligibility. As always, the more information we have the easier it is for us to determine your eligibility.

Timelines

- ▶ Santa Monica College is proudly home to thousands of out of state students, which means that we receive a lot of students seeking to reclassify their residency status.
- ▶ Given the amount of information each student is required to submit, the review period for Residency Classification Questionnaires is up to **14 business days**.
- ▶ Submit your documents as early as possible to avoid delays in processing, especially as the semester payment deadline approaches! SMC does not allow for fee postponements. If your tuition rate isn't adjusted before the payment deadline you may have to pay the nonresident tuition cost and wait to be refunded the difference in 6-8 weeks, if approved.
- ▶ Residency Classification Questionnaires must be submitted by the start of the semester to be considered. **Failure to submit it on time will result in being responsible for any nonresident fees owed that semester.**

Priority Deadlines

- ▶ The Priority Deadline for Residency Questionnaires refers to the deadline to submit and have it reviewed and responded to prior to the semester payment deadline.
 - ▶ Summer 2025 payment deadline: June 11th 2025
 - ▶ Summer 2025 priority deadline: June 4th 2025
- ▶ Fall 2025 payment deadline: August 6th 2025
- ▶ Fall 2025 priority deadline: July 31st 2025

Submitting Documents

- ▶ Santa Monica College recently transitioned over to a new web based forms system called “Dynamic Forms”, which allows students to submit and track a variety of student forms through an easy to manage website.
- ▶ Visit www.smc.edu/forms to access the forms, you will be required to sign in to your SMC network account before accessing the form.
- ▶ We require a clear photo or scan of all documents, if you do not provide clear copies you will be asked to resubmit the information.
- ▶ If you do not have access to a scanner, most smart phones have the capability to scan documents, either through native features or a third party app.

Questions and References

- ▶ Admissions and Records is happy to provide further assistance with this process should you have any questions down the road.
- ▶ Our Residency website has all requirements listed, visit www.smc.edu/Residency for full policy breakdowns
- ▶ You can email specific questions regarding your case to Residency@smc.edu - be sure to use your student email account so our staff know they are communicating with the student directly.
- ▶ To talk to a live Admissions and Records representative you can add yourself to the QLess call list found at www.smc.edu/Admissions