

## **New Florida Law Eliminates Documentation Requirements and Makes Education More Affordable**

The recent signing of House Bill 851 by Governor Rick Scott is big news in the State of Florida. Also known as the “Florida Dream Act,” the law made headlines by granting in-state college tuition to some undocumented immigrants. Under the new law, all students who have earned their State of Florida High School Diploma after completing three consecutive years of high school education in-state are eligible for resident tuition if they begin their postsecondary education within two years of graduating high school.

Less reported is the new law’s impact on adult education. It eliminates the distinction between resident and non-resident tuition for adult education classes. Newly enrolled students will no longer need to provide several forms of documentation proving that they have resided in Florida for at least one year. Starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, all school district and state college adult basic education students will be assessed the same block tuition of \$46 per half-year or \$30 per term. This fee and residency requirement, instituted July 2011, has been cited as the reason behind a dramatic decrease in adult education enrollment following its implementation.

The law additionally removes automatic, inflation-based tuition increases among postsecondary institutions and limits the percentage colleges and universities in the state are permitted to raise tuition each year. The allowable increase has been reduced from 15% to 6%, with the exceptions of the University of Florida and Florida State University. Other institutions wishing to increase tuition by more than 6% will now need to receive legislative approval to do so.

The issue had a long road through the legislature over the last couple of years, and these changes were made possible with the leadership and support of several key legislators, ACE of Florida, and adult educators throughout the state.

For more information on House Bill 851, see the [Summary Analysis released by the Florida House of Representatives](#).