

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding SC Residency

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### *How long must I live in South Carolina before I can establish residency?*

**Academic Common Market (ACM):** A person must live in South Carolina for 12 consecutive months (1 year) prior to anticipated start date to establish residency.

**Regional Contract Program (RCP):** A person must live in South Carolina for 24 consecutive months (2 years) prior to anticipated start date to establish residency.

### *What kind of documents establish intent to become a SC resident?*

1. Statement of full-time employment;
2. Designating South Carolina as state of legal residence on military record;
3. Possession of a valid South Carolina driver's license, or if a non-driver, a South Carolina identification card. Failure to obtain this within 90 days of the establishment of the intent to become a South Carolina resident will delay the beginning date of residency eligibility;
4. Possession of a valid South Carolina vehicle registration card. Failure to obtain this within 45 days of the establishment of the intent to become a South Carolina resident will delay the beginning date of residency eligibility;
5. Maintenance of domicile in South Carolina;
6. Paying South Carolina income taxes as a resident during the past tax year, including income earned outside of South Carolina from the date South Carolina domicile was claimed;
7. Ownership of principal residence in South Carolina; or
8. Licensing for professional practice (if applicable) in South Carolina.

\*Please note that any single indicator may not be conclusive.

### *My parents and I were not residents of South Carolina when I graduated from high school, are there any State Scholarships or Grants I can qualify for?*

Students who did not graduate from high school in South Carolina and were not dependents of SC residents at the time of high school graduation may be eligible to receive the SC Need-based Grant and/or Lottery Tuition Assistance. Please contact the financial aid office at your institution about your eligibility.

### *I am a member of the military. How does that affect my SC residency?*

Members of the military permanently assigned in SC on active duty and their dependents qualify under an exception category. Military members and their dependents may be charged in-state tuition and fees without having to establish a permanent home in South Carolina.

SC residents who are members of the military stationed outside of SC and their dependents may receive in-state tuition and fees if they continue to claim SC as their state of legal residency. This must be reflected on the individual's taxes and Leave and Earnings Statement (LES). SC residents who change their state of legal residence lose their SC resident status for tuition and fee purposes.

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***What if I'm using Post 9-11 GI Bill Benefits at my institution?***

You may be eligible to pay in-state tuition charges while living in the state and using specific education benefits at a public college or university if you are:

- A veteran who has served 90 days or longer on active duty
- A person entitled to and receiving assistance under Section 3319, Title 38 of US Code, or who is using transferred benefits under this Section while the transferor is on active duty
- A person who is entitled to and receiving assistance under Section 3311(b)(9), Title 38 of US Code
- A person who is entitled to and receiving rehabilitation benefits under Section 3102(a), Title 38 of USC Code

***My parents are divorced. How does that affect my residency? What about scholarships?***

If one of the following scenarios applies to your situation then you can claim SC residency:

- \*Joint Custody and one parent is a SC resident; or
- \*Parent that claiming the child on income taxes; or
- \*Parent that is SC resident pays child support over the cost of attendance as dictated by the college.

If you are a dependent of a SC resident, then you may be eligible for State scholarships and grants. Please consult the financial aid office at your institution.

***What happens if my parents are transferred out-of-state?***

Generally, the student may continue to claim SC residency if he/she is continuously enrolled during all regular academic terms (fall and spring terms or their equivalent) if the family had lived in South Carolina for over three years.

***My company transferred me to South Carolina from Florida my daughter's senior year of high school. Will she be eligible for the State scholarships?***

For her to be eligible for the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarships, you will need to be a resident of SC at the time she graduates from high school. The following items will show the intent to become a resident of SC:

1. Statement of full-time employment in SC;
  2. Designating South Carolina as state of legal residence on military record;
  3. Possession of a valid South Carolina driver's license, or if a non-driver, a South Carolina identification card. Failure to obtain this within 90 days of the establishment of the intent to become a South Carolina resident will delay the beginning date of residency eligibility;
  4. Possession of a valid South Carolina vehicle registration card. Failure to obtain this within 45 days of the establishment of the intent to become a South Carolina resident will delay the beginning date of residency eligibility;
  5. Maintenance of domicile in South Carolina;
  6. Paying South Carolina income taxes as a resident during the past tax year, including income earned outside of South Carolina from the date South Carolina domicile was claimed;
  7. Ownership of principal residence in South Carolina; or
  8. Licensing for professional practice (if applicable) in South Carolina.
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***What is the difference in applying for residency as dependent or independent?***

If a parent, guardian, or spouse provided more than half of the student's support for the past twelve months, the student is considered dependent, and it is the parent, guardian, or spouse that must meet the residency requirements. If the student provided most of the support, then the student may be eligible to apply as independent. An independent student must have his/her own SC domicile. Dormitory housing cannot be used as one's domicile, as it is temporary in nature.

***Am I required to provide over 50% of my total financial support to be considered independent?***

You must provide over 50% of your total support with earnings coming from his/her own earnings or income from employment, investments, or payments from trusts, grants, scholarships, commercial loans, or payments made in accordance with court order. Total support must also be greater than total expenses.

***Can gifts from parents and relatives be counted as support that a student has provided?***

No. Gifts are considered money coming from elsewhere and do not count toward financial independence. Financial support must come from the sources listed in the law/regulations.

***Are Parent (PLUS) loans considered financial support contributed by students?***

No. PLUS loans are applied for and awarded to the parents.

***Are pre-paid tuition plans considered financial support provided by the parents?***

Yes. Even though pre-payment plans are in students' names, the parents contributed the funds and received the tax benefits. Therefore, they are considered funds from the parents.

***Can I use the money I've saved in my savings and checking accounts to establish my financial independence?***

A student may be allowed to use money saved in a savings or checking account if he/she can prove that the funds are from allowable sources. Allowable sources consist of his/her own earnings or income from employment, investments, or payments from trusts, grants, scholarships, commercial loans, or payments made in accordance with court order.

***Does owning property in South Carolina allow students to receive in-state tuition?***

No. For independent students, owning property by itself does not allow students to receive in-state tuition, as the other requirements still must be met. For parents of dependent students, South Carolina must be the primary state of residence. Simply owning property is not sufficient.

***If I have lived in South Carolina for more than one year, does that make me eligible for in-state tuition?***

No. There is nothing automatic about residency. You must meet all the requirements, submit a residency application, and be approved before you become eligible.

***If I move here and live with relatives, does that make me eligible?***

Not unless the relative has permanent court-ordered guardianship and claims you on their taxes.

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***Am I eligible for residency if I use a South Carolina address on all my records and legal documents?***  
 You still must meet the other requirements. For admission, other factors are important, such as the source of transcripts and addresses of parents.

***Can I use my on-campus apartment as my family's residence?***

On-campus housing is considered temporary because you must be a student to live in it. As a result, you may not use on-campus housing to prove in-state residency.

***If I enroll as an out-of-state student, my first year can I receive in-state tuition and fees the second year if I live off-campus?***

No. You would need to establish residency and show you are in SC for reasons other than attending college.

***Where do I submit an appeal if I do not agree with the institution's decision?***

Students wishing to appeal a decision must follow the grievance procedures established by the college or university to which they apply.

***Who do I need to contact regarding the Regional Contract Program for Veterinary and Optometry Medicine or Academic Common Market Program?***

For residency questions regarding the Regional contract Program for Optometry Medicine or the Academic Common Market program, please contact Kenita D. Pitts, Office of Academic Affairs and Licensing at [kpitts@che.sc.gov](mailto:kpitts@che.sc.gov) or (803) 856-0037.

**Notes:**

- ***Applications for the ACM and RCP must be mailed. Emailed applications will not be accepted.***
  - ***Submit application and supporting documents to:***
    - ***Kenita D. Pitts 1122 Lady Street Suite 400 Columbia, SC 29201***
- ***Information provided is subject to change.***
- ***Periodic changes are made in the ACM Program Inventory without prior notice.***
  - ***Please visit <https://acmi.sreb.org/acm/s/program-search-page-public> for the most recent list of eligible programs.***

