



HOW TO SUPPORT COLLEGE-BOUND UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

ADVICE FOR COUNSELORS & EDUCATORS

Facts about Undocumented Students

- Undocumented students are foreign nationals who came to the US without legal documentation or overstayed their visas.
- 2.5 million undocumented youth live in the US.
- About 65,000 undocumented students graduate from US high schools each year. Only 5-10% of these graduates go to college. *We can increase that number!*
- Many students don't know they're undocumented until they begin the college process.
- Undocumented students don't qualify for state or federal grants or loans, even if their parents pay taxes. They also cannot legally work to pay for school.
- Being told or believing that undocumented students can't go to college can harm a student to the point they lose hope and drop out of high school

Why You Should Help Undocumented Students

- We want all of our students to attend our colleges and contribute meaningfully to this country.
- These students are an important part of our nation's future.
- Undocumented students who are college-ready have proven they can succeed.
- They are not asking to be given anything; they just want to be fairly considered.
- They affirm our belief in the value of hard work and are powerful role models.
- Under federal law, all students – regardless of citizenship or residency – are entitled to a K-12 education, including college counseling services.
- We've already invested in these students' educations.
- When the DREAM Act passes, these students will have a path towards legal residency.

10 Ways You Can Help Undocumented Students

- Tell undocumented students that they can go to college, but some options and services will not be available to them.
- Don't ask students to self-identify. Make information and resources available to all students.
- Be open-minded. Don't make assumptions about which students are undocumented; they aren't all Latino, Spanish-speaking or enrolled in ESOL classes.
- Be knowledgeable about specific policies that affect undocumented students.
- Support the federal DREAM Act and PA legislation to support undocumented students.
- Identify scholarships that don't require citizenship or permanent residency. Encourage other scholarships to change their policies.
- Identify sponsors who can support undocumented students.
- Help students get ongoing mentoring and advice, even after the college admissions process.
- Identify older students to serve as role models.
- Refer students to qualified legal counsel to investigate possible immigration remedies. This can be a lengthy process, and not all students will have immediate remedies.



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ADVICE REGARDING FINANCIAL AID

Can Undocumented Students Qualify for In-State Tuition?

- It varies from institution to institution
- There is no In-State Tuition mandate in Pennsylvania, each institution has their own policies

Applying for Scholarships

- Scholarships are the primary way for undocumented students to pay for college. Helping students identify scholarships they are eligible for and writing a strong personal essay is vital to their success in college.
- Encourage students to put A LOT of time and energy into scholarship applications.
- Make sure students research and apply to scholarships EARLY – ideally starting in the spring of junior year.
- Find as many scholarships as possible (especially local ones) that do not require citizenship.
- Strongly encourage students to apply to every single scholarship they can.
- Advocate for the students within the school so they can get strong recommendations.
- Make sure students are very explicit in talking about their story and financial need.

Looking for Scholarships

Individual Scholarships

- Go to www.e4fc.org to review a large number of scholarships that don't require proof of citizenship or permanent residency status.

Private School Scholarships

- Private universities are expensive but can often provide additional support through institutional grants and scholarships. Check with each school individually to see if:
 1. undocumented students are eligible to apply for institutional scholarships
 2. a paper FAFSA or CSS Profile should be submitted to determine financial need.





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WHAT UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW

- You are not alone. Thousands of undocumented students have gone to college in the US and graduated. This won't be easy, but you can do it.
- There is no law in the state of Pennsylvania that says Undocumented students can't go to college.
- Get comfortable asking for help. Find people you can trust to help you navigate the college process.
- Not all college options and services will be available to you, but many are. Be creative. Be entrepreneurial.
- You are not eligible for federal or state-based financial aid, but you can apply to many private scholarships. Research and apply early to as many scholarships as possible. Community service and internships greatly increase your chance of winning scholarships.
- Practice telling "your story" as many private scholarships require a face-to-face interview.
- If you have significant unmet financial need, you should consider going to a community college first and then transferring to a four-year to save money. Many bright, talented, and ambitious students choose this economical option!
- Even if you intend to go to a private school, you should apply to CCP as a backup plan.
- Many colleges and universities have support groups for undocumented students. Get in touch with them to make your transition smoother.

Privacy & Legal Concerns

- Students should not worry about revealing their immigration status when filling out admissions applications because the Federal Education and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student records at all educational institutions.
- Students should not lie about their immigration status during the college admissions process because admission decisions could be revoked.
- Every student should obtain a school ID number from the colleges where they apply to avoid being asked for his/her social security number during admissions and enrollment.