UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

PeerForward Resource Guide for Educators

PEER FORWARD®

Supporting Students who are Undocumented

High school students who are undocumented experience additional challenges when making postsecondary plans. Informed with facts, an advisor can help their students better understand options.

1. The federal law (Plyler v. Doe) states it is **unconstitutional for a public school system to deny education to children based on immigration status.** This 1982 Supreme Court case requires school districts to provide the funds and educational opportunity to every K-12 child – regardless of their documentation, immigrant, or citizenship status.

2. K-12 school personnel **cannot inquire about the immigration status** of students or their parents. The only way to learn of a students' citizenship or immigration status is if the student voluntarily shares that information with you. You cannot ask. Public schools cannot withhold education or school supports to students, regardless of documentation status.

3. Often, students only **learn they are undocumented** when they begin to apply for college. There are numerous stories of students who have lived their entire lives in the United States only to learn they are undocumented after trying to apply for federal student financial aid.

4. Exclusive of the social-emotional impact, undocumented students aspiring to attend college encounter **c**hallenges in two main areas: applying to colleges and **paying** for college.

5. All students can apply to college. There is **no federal law requiring proof of citizenship** to attend U.S. colleges and universities of higher education. Public colleges may vary in their admissions and enrollment policies from state to state. **Some colleges** have more "undocu-friendly" admissions policies (example: they do not require proof of citizenship/residency, and they offer institutional (versus federal) financial aid).

6. There is **non-federal financial aid** for college. Private scholarships and grants, along with institutional financial aid (available from the college) are non-federal monies available to students. They can complete a CSS Profile and search and apply for scholarships and grants offered by colleges/universities. The CSS Profile does not ask for a social security number or proof of citizenship, but it will ask for tax return information because many colleges make need-based decisions when awarding institutional financial aid.

7. Parents' citizenship or immigration status **does not affect the student's eligibility** for college or financial aid. It is the immigration or citizenship status of the person applying to the college and the status of the person applying for financial aid that matters. Eligibility for financial aid and the college application(s) depend on the student's status.

8. DACA stands for **D**eferred **A**ction for **C**hildhood **A**rrivals. It was enacted by a 2012 executive order. **It was rescinded on September 5, 2017 and is no longer applicable**. The U.S. Center for Immigration Services created an infographic which explained Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Supporting Students who are Undocumented

Often, students do not learn they are undocumented until they begin to apply for college. You can imagine there is a range of emotions that come with this discovery during this crucial time. For educators who are interested, here are a few things you can do to help:

Create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment.

If you are comfortable, identify yourself as an "Undocu-Ally" and display it in your classroom.
- Some resources from United We Dream:
  ‣ Toolkit: Educators and Institutions – for teachers and schools to increase awareness and supports for undocumented students; includes ready-to-print visuals.
  ‣ Toolkit: Creating Sanctuary – for organizing and building sanctuary for undocumented students.
  ‣ "Here to Stay" folder of visuals for Educators – ready-to-print and ready-to-post visuals for your classroom and social media.

Know your state's laws and stay updated with the current changes.
- Go to your state government's webpage and search for keywords like *immigration, undocumented students*, and *DACA*.
- Some organizations may provide updates on the policies and laws concerning immigration and undocumented students:
  ‣ Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund: https://www.maldef.org/
  ‣ National Immigration Law Center: https://www.nilc.org/

Remember (and remind others!) that going to college is an option for all students – regardless of immigration status.
- Make sure your colleagues and administrators know this fact, so students don't get mixed messages.
- Within your school, formally or informally establish a protocol for promoting college and postsecondary options to ALL students.

Be aware of the added social-emotional challenge of students who are undocumented and know where you can direct them for appropriate coping and mental health support.
- School-based supports: psychologist, counselor, social worker
- Community-based supports
- Counseling services through private insurance
- Guide developed by the National Latina/o Psychological Association and United We Dream for immigrant youth with tips and resources for self-care of their social-emotional well-being

Help the students look towards the future.
- Encourage and remind them to stay focused on school and their grades. Scholarship and college prospects expand when students can raise and maintain their GPAs.
- Be prepared to provide students with guidance and support for the future planning. If you don't feel comfortable providing them with this guidance, actively connect them to people and information that would provide them with the support they need.

Your support for their college search and search for college funding will make a positive impact on their postsecondary outcomes and social-emotional well-being.

Help a student find and identify colleges with "undocu-friendly" admissions policies.

Colleges who have admissions policies that are welcoming to students who are undocumented tend to make a statement about their policies on their website. Usually you can find it in their Diversity and inclusion statement or page, Affordability and/or Financial Aid page, or Admissions page.
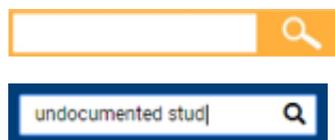
When a college doesn't have an explicit statement, they can indicate it in other ways. A college might be "undocu-friendly" if they:

- Have campus and web resources for first-generation college students;
- Have translation capabilities on their website and/or some of the information is in Spanish or other languages;
- Have need-blind and full need admissions policies (this will be posted on their financial aid web page or part of their site that addresses affordability);
- Offer some financial aid for international students;
- Make explicit mention of "non-citizens" on their admissions procedures;
- Have financial aid staff dedicated to international students and/or undocumented students (ex. the University of Michigan and the University of Rochester have a staff person in the Financial Aid office as a point of contact for undocumented students).

Colleges and universities in partnership with organizations committed to increasing enrollment of underrepresented student populations and those attempting to address the barriers of college access tend to be supportive of undocumented students. When you find an organization that fits this description, check to see if they have college partners.

How else can we tell?

- ▶ Use the college website's search tool.
- ▶ In the search box, type undocumented students.
- ▶ Review the search return results. Consider it a green light if they…
  - Have multiple return results;
  - Return at least 1 webpage on the college's website;
  - Have at least 1 result that leads to a section on the financial aid and/or admissions page;
  - Result in articles documenting faculty, staff, dean, and/or the college president as allies.

Which colleges have policies and supports that are "friendly" to students who are undocumented?
This list has over 70 leads.

Domestic Student or International Student?

Q: Some undocu-friendly colleges advise undocumented students to apply as international students, others guide them to apply as domestic first-year students. Which one is it?

A: It depends on the college (really!). Colleges and universities vary in their procedure, which typically varies depending on their state's laws and whether or not the institution is public or private. Also notice the college's guidance for how to get institutional financial aid; it also might be different for domestic and international categories.

(!) Alabama and South Carolina have policies prohibiting undocumented students from enrolling in their public colleges.

Domestic or International?

Despite living their entire lives (or most of it) in the United States, students who are undocumented are not recognized as U.S. citizens and may more closely qualify as an international student when applying for college. Their eligibility for state residency will impact their tuition rate. If the state will recognize the student as a resident, they pay in-state tuition. Otherwise, they will pay the international student tuition rate (or out-of-state tuition rate, if different).

Proof-of-residency requirements are college-specific and state-specific. The eligibility or requirements for applying as a domestic or international student are specific to the college's policies – which tend to be guided by their state's legislation. Keep these facts in mind as you support your students. Students and their families may need your help with navigating through this information or verifying the information they are able to find.

The Repository of Resources for Undocumented Students gives information on some states with specific supports and legislation concerning college-bound students who are undocumented.

Share information about finding money for college.

Give them information about different types of financial aid. Research and share information about scholarships and financial aid available to undocumented students. Their eligibility for federal financial student aid depends on their citizenship status (not their parents').

- If the **student is a U.S. citizen** but their parents are not, they **can still apply for federal aid** with the FAFSA.
- If the **student is not a U.S. citizen**, even though their parents are, they will **not be eligible for federal aid**.

Students who are not U.S. citizens must look for non-federal financial aid.

Scholarships and Grants

Guide them toward private scholarships. There are many scholarship search engines online and a few on mobile apps. Some examples:

- Fastweb
- FinAid

- Going Merry
- Unigo

! Remind them that **they should not be paying for scholarship applications,** and **warn them about scholarship scams.**

Remind students to consider their **strengths, talents, parents' employers, religious groups**, and **community organizations** when searching and applying for scholarships. Some of these funding sources come in the form of competitions or contests. Examples:

- Scholastic, Inc. and local library for writing or poetry contests
- Tuition assistance for students with STEM-related interests
- Service organizations that support students in service - Lions Club, Rotary Club, Elks Lodge

Institutional Financial Aid

Become familiar with the College Board's CSS Profile, so you can provide some guidance to students.

- Colleges listed in this database offer institutional financial aid; it's free to search the database.
- It is a database for non-federal financial student aid and where the students can **apply for colleges' institutional financial aid (grants and scholarships directly from the college)**.
- The CSS Profile costs money to register, but fee waivers are available based on financial need and specific student situations. Students who qualify for SAT/ACT waivers could also get CSS Profile waivers.
- The $25 registration fee includes an application for aid to one college. It costs $16 to send an application to each additional school.

Guide the student to make a college list first and then search the CSS Profile database for the college(s).

- If the colleges require the CSS Profile to apply for their institutional aid, complete the CSS Profile.
- If the colleges do not offer institutional aid or do not require the CSS Profile to apply for their institutional aid, then there may be little or no reason for them to complete the CSS Profile.

State-specific Resources and Financial Aid

If you reside in California (CA), Illinois (IL), Kansas (KS), Nebraska (NE), New Mexico (NM), New York (NY), Oklahoma (OK), Texas (TX), Utah (UT), Washington (WA), and Wisconsin (WI), check the Repository of Resources for Undocumented Students.

- The College Board compiled the Repository of Resources for Undocumented Students. Information and related hyperlinks are organized by state and in categories (Admission, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Student Organizations, Other Support Organizations). While 2012 is the latest version available, the document is a good reference point in your research.

As of 9/19/2019, 19 states **extend in-state tuition to undocumented students.** If the student lives in one of the following states, guide them to **verify they meet the in-state tuition criteria** outlined by the college:

Arkansas	Illinois	New Jersey	Rhode Island*
California	Kansas	New Mexico	Texas
Colorado	Maryland	New York	Utah
Connecticut	Minnesota	Oklahoma*	Washington
Florida	Nebraska	Oregon	

These states have in-state tuition policies through Board of Regents decisions. The others have policies established by legislation.

As of 9/19/2019, at least 7 states allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid.

California	Maryland	New Mexico	Washington
Colorado	Minnesota	Texas	

Students should understand necessary expenses and "need-related" terms.

Necessary Expenses

Even if scholarships and grants cover the entire tuition cost, there will still be other expenses. We don't want to deter them from aspiring to college, but **they should be appropriately informed of some of the costs and expenses** that go with the college experience. Some of these include:

- **Technology**
    - ‣ The student will need their own laptop.
    - ‣ Colleges will suggest their minimum technology requirements (ex. Wi-fi connectivity, processing chip capacity and speed, memory, etc.) for the laptop so it can connect properly (and fast enough!) to the campus network.
    - ‣ Colleges still have computer stations and computer labs available, and there is typically a fee for any printing (course-related or not).
- **Travel between home and college between semesters**
    - ‣ If students don't go home between semesters, they should know that dining halls are typically closed and the time between the semester breaks are not covered in their meal plans.
- **Region-appropriate clothing**
    - ‣ Moving from Texas to Southern California may not impact a wardrobe as much as going to school in Boston after living in Virginia. They'll need a warm, water-repellent coat and snow boots in regions that have snow annually. Students should plan to dress for the weather to maintain their physical health and well-being.
- **Food**
    - ‣ While many freshman meal plans usually include meals on the weekends and are typically comprehensive and feature a variety of food and dining options (buffet style, ala carte, to-go, etc.), the student may want to occasionally join their friends or hall mates for pizza delivery or an evening out in town.
- **Toiletries and detergents**
    - ‣ The college dorm experience comes with some easily overlooked expenses! While the toiletries should last longer because they are not shared with an entire household, they'll still need to be purchased upfront.
    - ‣ Other items freshmen typically need to purchase because they don't use them in their houses with their families: bathrobe, shower shoes, extra-long twin sheets and linens
- **Laundry**
    - ‣ Whether loaded on a card, using quarters for the machines, or using a laundry service, they'll need money to wash their clothes.
- **Books and Lab fees for some courses**
    - ‣ Some science, kinesiology, and elective courses require fees for materials or equipment.
    - ‣ Required textbooks can be purchased or rented. Even when textbooks and books are available as e-books (ex. Kindle version), there will still likely be a fee to purchase or rent.
    - ‣ Renting or buying used textbooks (versus buying new) are a way to save money, but it will depend on availability/stock. The earlier the student secures a textbook rental, the better (which means money up front) because they could run out of used copies or rentals.
    - ‣ The common course expectation is that students will read the material and come to class with the book, passage, or textbook to refer to it during class. Even if a course doesn't have a textbook, there will be assigned reading that might need to be printed out.

"Need-related" terms and policies

Review some terms: need-blind, full need, need-aware

- The terms emerged around 2012 and became applicable to about 5 colleges in the nation. The number of colleges who describe themselves as _need-blind_ are growing. Check college websites carefully for who _full need_ applies; sometimes a college may reserve this type of financial aid policy for domestic students only. Also, understand that full need depends on the college's calculation of _demonstrated financial need_. Help the student and their parent(s) understand what that means for them.

- Colleges who advertise they have "need-blind" policies are signaling their intentions: to select applicants without considering their ability to pay tuition. When the college is need-blind AND full need, they are pledging to ensure a person's financial situation does not become a barrier to earning a degree.

- When colleges state they have _need-aware_ policies (ex. for financial aid for international students), it means they consider how much the applicant can pay as they think about whether or not to offer the applicant admission.

- Colleges can have need-blind policies for some applicants (ex. domestic) and need-aware for others. Read carefully to whom the terms apply.

  ‣ Example: A college posted they were need-blind and full need for domestic students and disclosed they were need-aware in their financial aid awards to international students. In the financial aid section for international students, they explained that the amount of aid awarded to international students depended on the number of international applicants expressing need and the amount of money they would need. The amount of money the international applicant needs is a factor in deciding if and how much money is offered to the student.

Students and parents should save money often and early.

Save

Help the student understand that college is an investment in their future that starts with saving early for college tuition and expenses.

- In 2015, according to the Economic Policy Institute, college graduates earned 56% more than people with high school diplomas only.

- According to a study published in 2011 by Georgetown University's Center on education and the Workforce, over their lifetime, a person with a bachelor's degree earns an average of one million dollars more than a person with a high school diploma only. This is 74% more in lifetime earnings.

- Reflecting on needs and wants can encourage students to save money for school.

Earn

Inform the student about job opportunities and the networking advantages of seasonal work.

- Even without a SSN, the student can get informal jobs within their community providing services for neighbors, friends, and family.

- Help them brainstorm jobs they could do for some extra money: babysitting, dog walking, landscaping, washing cars, shoveling snow, raking leaves, styling hair, etc.

- They should feel free to let their "employers" know they are trying to earn money for college. It could lead to a reference.

The ITIN: Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

An ITIN may be of interest to the student, if a college or scholarship application will accept it as an identification number (instead of an SSN). The Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is a free identification number issued by the U.S. government to employees who do not qualify for a Social Security Number (SSN).[i] **The ITIN is for tax filing purposes – for employees, their spouses, and their dependents.** Non-citizens pay income taxes using their ITINs. The ITIN does not provide work authorization in the US, eligibility for Social Security benefits, or Earned Income Tax benefits. If a student has a parent with an ITIN or social security number, the student will be eligible for an ITIN [ii]. If a student has a passport (unstamped is ok) and an official U.S. school document, they can apply for an ITIN. [iii]

Use discretion when deciding to apply for an ITIN. In 2017, the eligibility requirements for the ITIN were revised, and mainly impacted persons 18 and over. While the ITIN is used for tax-filing, tax-paying, and record keeping purposes, there is some concern that it provides a way for the U.S. government to identify individuals who are ineligible for social security benefits. The pool of people ineligible for social security benefits includes more than undocumented persons. It includes visa holders (students, professors, and foreign workers), spouses of visa holders, spouses of resident aliens, and spouses of U.S. citizens who are not U.S. citizens themselves. [iv]

A note about the Social Security Number

There is an argument that the social security number (SSN) is private and not required for college applications. There are also concerns that SSNs on the applications makes the student vulnerable to data breaches.[v] If the college application asks for an SSN, inquire with the college **how** it will be used and **if it is required** for the application. If the SSN is required, the student will be ineligible to apply. However, **if it is not required, help the student request another number or another way to be identified.** Request to use another filing number of the college's choice and proceed with the application (unless it is a public college in Alabama or South Carolina [vi]). If the student receives an identification number from the college, advise them to include the number on all correspondences between the student and that college.[vii] Alternatively, the college could offer to accept an ITIN as the student's identification number.

This advice also applies to scholarship applications requesting applicants' SSNs.

i   https://www.irs.gov/individuals/individual-taxpayer-identification-number
ii From the W-7 form (rev. 9/2019) instructions (pg. 3): "An alien individual eligible to be claimed as a dependent on a U.S. federal tax return but who isn't eligible to get an SSN" and "A dependent/spouse of a nonresident alien U.S. visa holder who isn't eligible for an SSN"
iii From the W-7 form (rev. 9/2019) instructions (pg. 3): "If at least 6 years of age but under 18 years of age: A U.S. school record, U.S. state identification card, or driver's license that lists the applicant's name and U.S. address, or a U.S. visa."
iv https://www.irs.gov/individuals/individual-taxpayer-identification-number
v   https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/college-application-ssns-expose-security-risk/56012/
vi Alabama and South Carolina have laws prohibiting enrollment of undocumented students to their public colleges.
vii https://talk.collegeconfidential.com/financial-aid-scholarships/680026-social-security-number.html

Glossary

CSS Profile
A database and application for non-federal financial aid provided by universities and colleges

Demonstrated need
The resulting amount of money a student needs in order to attend college, after calculating the difference between the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and Cost of Attendance (COA). Cost of Attendance (COA) – Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = Demonstrated Need

FAFSA
The Free Application for Federal Student Aid that is required for students to receive grants and other financial assistance from the federal government.

Fee waiver
A form that a student can fill out and submit to remove an application- or test-related fee. It is usually given based on eligibility requirements (ex. demonstrating financial need) and results in a free application or free test. It is usually applied to the SAT or ACT tests, college applications, and other education-related expenses.

Financial Aid
Various types of assistance for college expenses, including federal and non-federal aid, scholarships, grants, work-study, and student loans

Full need
A college or university's financial aid policy pledging to provide the admitted student's demonstrated financial need. Full need colleges ensure the student has the money they need to finish the year (or years – depends on the college) once enrolled. This can also be called "meeting 100% of demonstrated need".

Grant
Free money for school and are often based on financial need

Institutional Aid
Scholarships, grants, and other financial assistance that are provided by the college, rather than the federal or state government

Merit-based (financial aid)
Eligibility based on academic performance as shown by GPA and/or test scores

Need-aware
An admissions policy or financial aid policy disclosing that the applicant's ability to pay for tuition is factored in when deciding to admit the student (when it is in admissions) or when deciding to extend financial aid

Need-based (financial aid)
Eligibility based on financial situation or income or demonstrated need

Need-blind
An admissions policy with the intention to exclude the applicant's ability to pay for tuition when deciding to admit the student

Scholarship
Money awarded based on academic achievement or other factors, such as background, affinity group(s), interests, or where parents are employed

Student loan
Money that is borrowed by a student or student's parents which must be paid back, usually at a lower rate

Work study
A federal program that allows students to work part-time while enrolled in school. Work study jobs on campus are limited by the number of hours and the rate outlined by the work-study program.

Comparing the FAFSA and CSS Profile

Many people are familiar with the FAFSA and less familiar with the CSS Profile. The comparison chart can help aid in understanding the similarities and differences.

	FAFSA	CSS PROFILE
Link to Online Application	https://fafsa.ed.gov/spa/fafsa/#/LOGIN?locale=en_US	https://account.collegeboard.org/login/login?DURL=https://cbsso.collegeboard.org:443/as/M8q1o/resume/as/authorization.ping&appId=7
What does it stand for?	Federal Application for Student Aid	College Scholarship Service
What is it?	Application for **federal financial student aid.**	Database and application for **institutional financial student aid** (comes from the college), a type of **non-federal financial aid.**
Who runs it?	Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education. https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/	The College Board https://www.collegeboard.org/
What financial aid is available?	Scholarships, grants (Pell grant), work-study, and eligibility for federal student loans (for students and their parents).	Scholarships and grants
Who can apply?	U.S. citizens and some eligible non-citizens. https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/non-us-citizens#can-i-get-aid	Anyone, domestic and international students; Applicants must **follow the college's guidelines** – some of them direct students to apply in addition to the FAFSA and others direct students to use the CSS instead of the FAFSA.
What does an applicant need to apply?	From you and your parents: ❑ Social Security Number ❑ Alien Registration Number* ❑ Federal income tax returns, W-2s ❑ Other records of money earned ❑ Records of untaxed income** ❑ Bank statements ❑ Records of investments** ❑ An FSA ID	From you and all your parents*** : ❑ Recently completed tax returns ❑ W-2 forms and other records of current year income ❑ Records of untaxed income and benefits** ❑ Assets** ❑ Bank statements ❑ Names and birthdates of siblings**

	FAFSA	CSS PROFILE
How much does it cost to use or apply?	Free	$25 registration fee includes one application/ college and $16 for each additional college.
Is there a fee waiver?	N/A	Yes. If the student received an SAT waiver, is an orphan or ward of the court, or if the family meets the eligibility criteria for low income guidelines, waivers are available. https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/fee-waivers
When does the application open?	October 1	October 1
When does the application close?	June 30* *Check with the college(s) of interest. They typically have earlier deadlines (ex. February 1).	Check with the college(s) of interest. Typically, their Financial Aid Office and Financial Aid webpage or Affordability webpage will have this deadline.
Any tips for applying?	Monies are available until the funds run out, so **apply early!**	**Before applying**, check to see if the college(s) of your interest uses the CSS Profile.
How do they make award decisions?	Need-based, specific calculations that are applied to all applicants.	Considers financial need and other factors such as life or family circumstances.
Can undocumented students apply?	No.	Yes.
Do applicants need a SSN?	Yes.	No. The application has a space for it, but it is not required. No SSN? Leave it blank.
More information	https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/ filling-out https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/ default/files/fafsa-process.pdf https://www.goingmerry.com/blog/ how-to-apply-for-fafsa/	https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/misc/css-profile/cssprofile-tutorial/index.html https://www.goingmerry.com/blog/css-profile/

*for eligible non-citizens   **if applicable
***even if deceased, current stepparent, legal guardians, legal guardian's spouse, divorced/separated

Additional Resources

Some Scholarship database links and apps:

- ► [Fastweb](#)
- ► [FinAid](#)
- ► [Going Merry](#)
- ► [Unigo](#)
- ► Scholly (paid app)
- ► Scholarship leads for undocumented students:
  - https://www.fiscaltiger.com/scholarships-for-daca-undocumented-students/
  - https://www.nitrocollege.com/scholarships/undocumented-students
  - https://www.scholarships.com/financial-aid/college-scholarships/scholarships-by-type/scholarships-for-undocumented-students/

Information about scholarships from Student Aid
https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/grants-scholarships/finding-scholarships

Warning about scholarship scams
https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/scams#free-info-sources

Filling out the FAFSA webpage in Spanish
https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/es/fafsa/filling-out

For more information about the FAFSA through multiple representations (some available in Spanish)
https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/resources

CSS Profile Tutorial (slides)
https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/misc/css-profile/cssprofile-tutorial/index.html

An article with information about need-blind admissions policies and a list of need-blind schools
https://blog.collegevine.com/a-guide-to-need-blind-schools-complete-list/

Undocumented Students: Know Your Rights resource
In English: https://thebestschools.org/resources/undocumented-students-rights/
In Spanish: https://thebestschools.org/resources/estudiantes-indocumentados-derechos/

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"Questions for Undocumented Students to Ask." *IACAC*, Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling, www.iacac.org/undocumented/questions/