

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

PeerForward Resource Guide for Students

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS:

You Can Go to College!

There is no federal law requiring proof of citizenship to attend U.S. colleges and universities of higher education.



1. Start early!

#RealTalk: Your search for the “right-fit” college is narrowed to colleges that are supportive of undocumented students. There are some resources available with this information, but be prepared to spend time researching on your own. If you need financial aid, you will also need time to search for funding sources that do not have citizenship or residency requirements. With careful planning and an early start, your hard work can pay off.



2. Don't worry about your parents' citizenship status.

Your parents' citizenship or immigrant status has no impact on your college applications. If your parents are undocumented, you will not be able to apply for federal student aid, but you can still find sources of non-federal financial support (ex. institutional aid and private scholarships). Regardless of whether your parents are citizens or non-citizens, it will not prevent you from applying to college or winning scholarship money.



3. Talk to your parents.

As soon as you think you would like to explore earning a college degree, talk to your parents! There are many decisions and discussions that will need to take place regarding college/university, funding tuition, and tax returns. Your parents may not be aware of the choices or the steps in the process. You can help inform and remind them that college is an option for undocumented students, and then work together to make it happen!



4. Your status is your business.

You do not need to disclose your resident status to your school counselor or teacher. They are not allowed or required to ask about your documents – even if they are writing a recommendation letter. However, some students have found it helpful to share documentation information with counselors to get specific help on college application policies and the search for financial aid.



5. Look for private scholarships.

Without a social security number, you will not be eligible for federal student aid (Pell grants, federal work-study, etc.), but there are still other sources of financial aid! Companies, organizations, and some states offer scholarships and grants to students. Keep your eyes and ears open for these types of financial assistance!



6. Complete a CSS Profile.

The CSS Profile is an online application for private, non-federal student financial aid. The College Board has a database and application system for scholarships which do not require citizenship or residency information. There is a fee for the initial application, but students who are eligible for SAT waivers can also receive CSS waivers, which make the application free. The fee waivers are income-based, so the cost is lower or free for students from families with lower income..

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS:

Finding Colleges when Undocumented

FACT:

There is no federal or state law that prohibits the admission of undocumented immigrants to public or private U.S. colleges and universities.

FACT:

College admissions policies vary, and some policies impact undocumented students.

Example: Because of a 2003 recommendation by the state attorney general in Virginia, many four-year state (public) colleges require proof of citizenship or legal residency on their admissions application.

You will need to search for colleges that have admissions policies that are friendly to undocumented immigrants.

Here are some **questions to ask** as you research colleges and where you might **find answers**.

QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHERE YOU MIGHT GO FOR ANSWERS
Does the university require a social security number and proof of residency as part of the admissions application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the Admissions website, specifically the webpage that has the actual application link or link to the Common App.• Look on the college’s website or brochures for a list or section that’s labeled “Application Requirements” or “Ready to Apply.”• Ask your school counselor or career/college counselor if they know or can find out.
Are there undocumented students enrolled in the college/ university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer to the list of “Undocu-friendly” Colleges.• Refer to programs and foundations focused on creating and supporting pathways for DREAMers, Latinx, and DACA recipients, then research any college-affiliates or university partners.• Listen and look in the news or social media for success stories of students who are undocumented; pay attention to their college(s).• Ask your school counselor or college and career counselor if they know of any universities who have accepted students who are undocumented.• Check if any alumni from your high school, friends, or family are in college and identify as DREAMers, DACA, or undocumented. Notice which college(s).
Does the institution have a policy regarding whether or not it will report undocumented students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look on the admissions or application website. The institutions who are proud to support students who are undocumented tend to post their policy or a statement on their website.• Use the college site’s search feature to see if you get any return results for “undocumented”. If you get no results from the site search, beware.• Refer to the “Undocu-friendly Colleges” list. Generally, those colleges will not report undocumented students.• Ask a trusted adult to call the college to inquire (they can say they are “calling for research purposes”).

QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHERE YOU MIGHT GO FOR ANSWERS
<p>Will the institution consider undocumented students for institutional or private aid?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the college’s financial aid website for non-federal financial aid, grants, and scholarship opportunities that don’t require a FAFSA or citizenship. • Search for the college on the CSS Profile database. In the results, see if you are eligible for the aid offered.
<p>Does the institution offer any special scholarships for international students that students who are undocumented can apply for?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the CSS Profile database. • Look on the college’s financial aid website. • Use the search feature on the college’s site for “international students” and read what kind of aid is available. • Ask a trusted adult to call and ask for “research purposes.” • Check the college’s financial aid page for sections labeled “applying for financial aid” or “affordability”. Schools who identify as “need-blind” and “full need” colleges don’t consider the student’s ability to pay during the application process, and once accepted the college provides the money you need to attend the college. If you consider need-blind and full need schools, double check that their policies are for domestic and foreign/international students.
<p>Can a student use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) instead of a Social Security Number (SSN)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask someone in the admissions office (via phone or web chat feature). • Have a trusted adult contact the admissions office to ask. • Ask your school counselor or career/college counselor if they know or can find out.
<p>Will the institution accept the College Board CSS Profile or an institutional financial aid form instead of the FAFSA?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look on the college’s financial aid website. • See if the college is in the CSS Profile database (it’s free to look up colleges/universities).
<p>Is there a designated staff member or admissions counselor you or your counselor can contact with questions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the college’s admissions webpage and look for names of admissions counselors → pay attention to how many admissions counselors are available and if they are assigned to specific subgroups (ex. undergraduates, transfer students, international students, etc.). • Ask your school counselor or career/college counselor if they know or can find out.

If you are narrowing your college search through your **intended major or field of study**, double check:

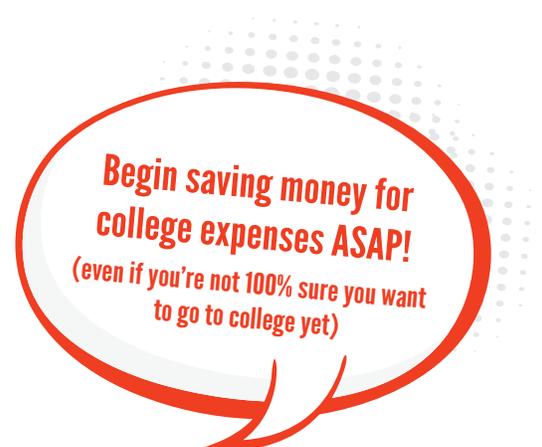
- Does the major or certification require a background check?
- Does the major lead to certification or state licensure which an undocumented student might be ineligible (does the certification/license require proof of citizenship)?

Example: Proof of citizenship is required for dentistry licenses in OK, AZ, and TN.

Based on information from “Questions for Undocumented Students to Ask.” IACAC, Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling, www.iacac.org/undocumented/questions/ on 11/23/2019; “Advising Undocumented Students.” Advising Undocumented Students - Explaining Financial Aid | Education Professionals, The College Board, 21 Feb. 2017, <https://professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/financialaid/undocumented-students> on 11/22/2019; and the Oklahoma Board of Dentistry, Arizona State Board of Dental Examiners, and Tennessee Board of Dentistry.

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS:

Funding College when Undocumented



FACT:

Without a social security number, you cannot apply for **federal** financial student aid with the FAFSA.

FACT:

There are other sources of financial assistance available to students that do not require a social security number or verification of citizenship or legal residency.

With early planning and resourcefulness, the search for college tuition is more possible than most people think.

Undocumented students can and do attend U.S. colleges and universities! As an undocumented student, you may face similar funding challenges as international and out-of-state students. The following tips can help.

1. You must start early!

You are ineligible to apply for federal financial aid, so your tuition and college funds must come from other sources. **Start searching for and saving money as early as you can** – even if you have not found your “perfect college” and even if you are not entirely sure you want to attend college immediately after graduation. Once you get accepted to postsecondary institutions and programs, you’ll be glad you did!

2. Research private scholarships.

Community organizations (ex. Boys and Girls Club, 4H), **religious groups**, and **civic groups** (ex. Rotary Club, Lions Club) may offer scholarships to active members or affiliates. Check your clubs and school organizations for local and national scholarship opportunities. Be sure to remain an active member. Typically, students have a greater chance at winning local scholarships because of the size of the applicant pool.

3. Research institutional financial aid using the [CSS Profile](#).

Some colleges provide institutional financial. The College Board has a database of private and institutional financial assistance offered by colleges and universities. You may [search the database](#) for free. To apply for private institutional aid, you must register and create a CSS Profile. Registration is \$25 and includes one application. Additional applications are \$16 each. **If you qualify for an SAT/ACT waiver, you can have a CSS Profile waiver, and your [CSS Profile](#) and applications will be free.**

4. Reflect on your strengths, talents, and interests as you search for scholarships and grants.

Generally, the **organizations offering private scholarships have specific interests and set their own application criteria**. Are you a good writer? Consider entering a writing or poetry contest for scholarship money. Are you interested in a career-specific field (ex. STEM, health care, education)? Search for organizations that promote and support students with those interests.

5. 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. The Repository provides links to general resources for all students and more detailed information specific to 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).

6. Look for colleges and universities with “need-blind” admissions and “full need” applications.

[Colleges with need-blind admissions policies](#) don't think about the student's ability to pay for college when deciding to admit them. Once a student is admitted, “full need” colleges pay for the student's demonstrated financial need. Some need-blind admissions policies apply to domestic applicants, international applicants, or both. You'll be able to find this information on the college's admission webpage and/or their financial aid or “affordability” webpage. Who has need-blind and/or full need admissions policies? Hamilton College (Clinton, NY), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA), Brown University (Providence, RI) and more.

7. Funding as an International Student

You'll end up paying the out-of-state or international student tuition, if the college does not recognize you as a legal domestic or in-state resident. **Check out the requirements for international student applicants, and see if you can apply as one. If you can apply as an international student, you could also qualify for financial aid for international students.** You can usually find this information on the college's Admissions website and/or Financial Aid websites. They tend to have sections for international students. Also, you can try to use the college site's search feature for the term “international students.” By the way, the CSS Profile database results will show whether or not a college has private financial aid available for international students too.

8. Maintain your grades.

Some private scholarships have **merit-based criteria**, requiring a minimum GPA to apply. Maintain and/or raise your GPA so you **remain eligible for these opportunities. Aim for a 3.0 or higher!** Ask your school counselor for assistance, if you are unclear where or how to find your GPA. Also, you can try this [GPA calculator](#) to get an estimate.

9. Consider a summer (or winter!) job.

A seasonal job will not only **earn you extra cash**, but it can also **help you make more connections and gain work experience**. Talk to **friends, neighbors, family, and community members** and see who might need someone to **mow the lawn, walk the dog(s), babysit, do hair and/or makeup, wash the car, rake leaves, shovel snow, trim bushes, tutor, or lead sports conditioning workouts**. Think about what you can do, your available time, and how you'll spread the word about your service. Your hard work and dependability could earn you loyal customers and a possible reference or two. If you're eligible for work at your local fast-food restaurants, many will offer tuition assistance to their employees. Some offer scholarships (ex. KFC and McDonalds); others offer tuition reimbursements (ex. Chipotle, Pizza Hut, and Starbucks)—meaning you will pay for your tuition upfront and the fast-food company will give you the money back by the end of the semester. Read the terms of their tuition assistance carefully because each has its own eligibility criteria.

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&appld=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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Number <input type="checkbox"/> Alien Registration Number* <input type="checkbox"/> Federal income tax returns, W-2s <input type="checkbox"/> Other records of money earned <input type="checkbox"/> Records of untaxed income** <input type="checkbox"/> Bank statements <input type="checkbox"/> Records of investments** <input type="checkbox"/> An FSA ID 	From you and all your parents*** : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recently completed tax returns <input type="checkbox"/> W-2 forms and other records of current year income <input type="checkbox"/> Records of untaxed income and benefits** <input type="checkbox"/> Assets** <input type="checkbox"/> Bank statements <input type="checkbox"/> 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