

SUPPORTING THE DREAM FOR ALL PHILADELPHIANS



June 2013

A Guide to College-Access Resources for Undocumented Students

KEY FACTS ABOUT IMMIGRATION AND UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

- An ***immigrant*** is a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.
- An ***undocumented immigrant*** is a person who resides in a country without proper documentation.
- **Children who are undocumented have the right to public K-12 education.**
Source: Plyer v. Doe (1982)
- Proof of citizenship or immigration status is neither mandated for nor conditional upon enrollment in a public K-12 school.
Source: PA Code § 11.11.d Entitlement of resident children to attend public schools; PA Dept. of Ed. Basic Education Circular 24 P.S. §13-1301 – §13-1306 (January 22, 2009)
- Providing children who are undocumented with all the services encompassed in a K-12 public education is neither criminal nor a mandated reporting issue. In fact, it is illegal to deny these services to undocumented students.
- There is no federal requirement barring undocumented students from pursuing higher education. Policies of tuition classification (in-state vs. international) and eligibility for institutional aid vary from school to school.

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-Julia Hillengas, Manager of College Access Partnerships

Supporting the Dream for All Philadelphians

A GUIDE TO COLLEGE-ACCESS RESOURCES FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

TALKING ABOUT IMMIGRATION STATUS

Students born outside of the United States may or may not know their immigration status until they start showing interest in getting a driver's license or going to college. Coming to terms with the realities and limited options available to undocumented youth is a tough and scary process. As a counselor, you can provide support, information, and options for undocumented students. There is no need for students to “come out” about their immigration status. Instead, have information available publicly and be aware of the hesitations, stumbling blocks, and additional barriers that undocumented students face.

Important Points to Make

Adapted from Katherine Gin's "Talking to Undocumented Students about Sensitive Subjects," Journal of College Admission (Winter 2010)

Regardless of where a student is born, completing high school and pursuing some post-secondary education is crucial to becoming a productive and self-sufficient adult. As a counselor, it is vital to be realistic but also support the hopes, dreams, and success of students. For undocumented students, the path after high school can feel limited and bleak. **However, academic success and commitment to education reflects favorably on students if they choose to apply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals/DACA (see Appendix A) or pursue the green card or naturalization process.** Further, *high school transcripts can be used as proof of state residency* so staying in school, graduating high school, and continuing, even part-time, to college without gaps makes proof of local residency much easier.

Here are some quick points to get the conversation going if students feel discouraged:

In regards to...	Stress that...
Going to college	Going to college will be difficult, but it is possible . There are a number of undocumented students at local universities right now. (See “Applying to College” section for more information.)
Paying for college	While you are not eligible for government financial aid, you can still apply to certain scholarships and may qualify for institutional aid and/or in-state tuition rates. (See “Paying for College” section for more information.)

In regards to...	Stress that...
Legalization	There may be immigration remedies and there are a number of free or low-cost clinics and supports to help families sort out their options. (<i>See “Appendix A” for more information.</i>)
Life after college	While a college degree does not change immigration status, it does open up many more job opportunities and reflects positively if you try to legalize in the future.
Revealing immigration status in a college application	You need to be honest about your immigration status (<i>leave SSN fields blank</i>), but FERPA will protect your privacy and prevent colleges from releasing your information.

Pros & Cons of Revealing Immigration Status in a Scholarship Essay

Adapted from the Educators for Fair Consideration’s 2012-2013 Scholarship List & Guide p.36-38

Students need to think carefully about *how* they talk immigration status in college and scholarship application essays. Students do not want to sound like a victim but rather like someone who has overcome challenges and succeeded. Further, unless the scholarship is specifically for undocumented students, immigration status should not be the main topic as it can overshadow academic accomplishments and aspirations.

PROS	CONS
You want people to be aware of the challenges you’ve faced and how you’ve overcome them	You don’t want this to define you
You want people to be aware of your financial need	You don’t want this to overshadow your accomplishments
You want people to be aware of your motivations	You don’t want to sound like a victim
	You don’t want to alienate someone who isn’t familiar with immigration issues

Examples of How Students Can Talk About Immigration Status

Adapted from the Educators for Fair Consideration's 2012-2013 Scholarship List & Guide p.36-38

Least Direct

Even though I was not eligible for federal or state financial aid because of my immigration status, I don't want finances to impede my future education goals. I might not have enough economical resources to pay for all the expenses a university requires, but I do have the hunger for learning and for getting the higher education a university can offer.

More Direct

I was always aware of my status, even as a young boy my parents had told me about it. They explained their reasoning for coming here and what our goals and aspirations as a family were. So I grew up always knowing, however it was only until junior year in high school that I really understood the gravity of our situation. With that understanding came a downward spiral during which I practically gave up all efforts in school; my reasoning was, why bother with all this work if it's not going to amount to anything. I managed to better my grades and keep my hopes somewhat up during my last year in school, and even flirted with the idea of applying to some universities, but without status and with no money it was a difficult journey ahead. In order for one to understand who I am, it is critical that one knows my history. My name is Victor and I was born in Santa Gertrudis, Oaxaca, Mexico: a poor village where residents walk on sun-beaten, unpaved streets, and walk in night's darkness due to the lack of streetlights. My childhood is filled with memories of dirt-streets, no potable water, and acres of corn and alfalfa fields. Unfortunately, my family and I were forced to leave Santa Gertrudis, Oaxaca due to a traumatized event, and immigrate into the U.S. illegally.

Examples of How Recommenders Can Talk about Immigration Status

Adapted from the Educators for Fair Consideration's 2012-2013 Scholarship List & Guide p.36-38

Least Direct

Yoshi works harder than any student I have ever taught. She is more determined than any student I have ever taught. Her heart is filled with positive energy. Her mind races to accumulate and assimilate new information. And she faces heart-breaking obstacles—poverty, immigration status, financial independence since she was sixteen, an utter lack of local family support and an almost untenable living situation with a generally uninterested aunt. She works so hard for herself because she feels she has no choice but to continually learn and grow so that one day she may be of great service to others. As difficult as her path has been and will continue to be, it is her goal to ease the path for those who come after her.

More Direct

Julio is a first generation college student. He is a second year student majoring in Civil Engineering at San Jose State University. Julio is considered a minority at San Jose State University because of his ethnic background and low-income status, yet he has been able to compete and excel with students who have no economic needs or better educational resources than him before starting their college career. Unlike most San Jose State University students who do not need to worry about finances, Julio has to. He faces financial struggles on an ongoing basis due to his legal status which does not grant him any source of government financial aid.

Privacy Concerns

Adapted from the Educators for Fair Consideration's 2012-2013 Financial Aid Guide for Undocumented Students p. 15

Students do **not** need to worry about revealing their immigration status when filling out admissions or financial aid applications.

The Federal Education and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student records at all educational institutions, including colleges and universities. These protections are the same for ALL public as well as private institutions.

Students should not lie about citizenship. Undocumented students who are caught lying about their citizenship will likely have their admissions acceptances revoked.

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Like all students, undocumented students will be accepted or rejected from colleges based on the strength of their application. However for undocumented students who are accepted, there is a risk of being classified as an “international student” which results in increased tuition rates. Proof of local residency can help avoid an “international” designation and make college more economical. Reaching out or referring students to **campus-based student groups** (ex. Dream Activists, nationality/ethnicity/cultural groups, other immigration rights groups) may provide some insight and tips into navigating particular institutions.

Public Colleges

Public colleges offer discounted tuition rates to residents of their state (“in-state tuition”). To qualify for “in-state tuition,” students must provide *proof of residency within the state*. **Pennsylvania state residency does not need to be related to immigration status.**

Generally, students can prove Pennsylvania residency with any one of the following:

- Pennsylvania high school transcript (if coming directly from high school)
- Lease
- Utility bill or other piece of mail
- Pay stub showing state taxes withheld

Every institution handles residency qualifications differently. Many institutions do not ask for proof of residency up front but will follow up with particular applications or automatically designate a residency classification that a student may then appeal.

Community College of Philadelphia is committed to serving Philadelphia students. Students must meet residency criteria to receive the "in-county" tuition rate. For more information, please contact:

**Ms. Jeri Draper
Director of Admissions
215-751-8806
jdraper@ccp.edu**

Private Colleges

Adapted from the Educators for Fair Consideration's 2012-2013 Financial Aid Guide for Undocumented Students p. 17

Private colleges can often provide undocumented students with more funds than public colleges and universities. Generally, the application process to private colleges is very competitive, and undocumented students are treated as international students. However, a number of local private colleges, including Franklin & Marshall and Swarthmore, are known nationally for giving scholarships to students without Social Security numbers. The best route is to contact each college's admissions and financial aid offices to find out about their policies for undocumented students.

Sample Questions to Ask Private Schools

- What are your institution's policies regarding undocumented students?
- Do you offer any institutional financial aid for undocumented students?
- What is the application process for these scholarships? Do you require that the student submit a paper FAFSA?
- Are these scholarships good for the entire time the student is at your school? What if it takes 5 years to graduate?
- Is there anything else we should know when helping undocumented students apply to your school?

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Undocumented students are **not eligible** for federal or state financial aid. This includes *Pell grants*, *Stafford loans*, *Work-Study jobs*, and *Pennsylvania State grants*. However, in the event that a college or scholarship application asks for a completed FAFSA form, students should **download and fill out a paper/PDF FAFSA form (leaving the Social Security field blank)** from www.fafsa.gov.

Scholarships

Scholarships are very important because they are the most common way that undocumented students pay for college. The following is a list of scholarships either specifically for undocumented students or known not to require proof of U.S. citizenship. There are many more scholarships that may not ask for proof of U.S. citizenship so it is worthwhile for students to do additional searches via websites like www.fastweb.com or www.latinocollegedollars.org.

The Ayn Rand Institute Essay Contest

Ayn Rand's novels are inspiring and intellectually challenging. But they can also be financially rewarding for high school and college students. The Ayn Rand Institute sponsors annual essay contests that offer 600 prizes and \$100,000 in prize money every year and has no citizenship requirements.

www.aynrandnovels.com/essay-contests/

Center for Student Opportunity (CSO) Scholarship

The Center for Student Opportunity (CSO) Opportunity Scholarship is a \$2,000, four-year renewable scholarship awarded to first-generation, low-income, and/or minority high school seniors enrolling at a CSO College Partner (see website for list).

www.csopportunity.org

Chicano Organizing & Research in Education (CORE) Scholarship

CORE proudly sponsors this scholarship to help undocumented students continue on their academic path. This scholarship is a response to the lack of financial assistance provided to students, who do not have the legal documentation, that attend college in the United States. In particular, we seek to support undocumented students that have met the rigorous academic requirements asked of them and hold the academic promise to achieve so much more. The "Que Llavea Café" Scholarship aims to support the dreams, hopes and aspirations of college

bound undocumented students so that they can earn their college education and allow for all of their hard work and sacrifice to persevere. This scholarship program strives to make a world of difference.

[*www.ca-core.org/que_llueva_cafe*](http://www.ca-core.org/que_llueva_cafe)

Cruzando Fronteras/Ayudando la Comunidad Scholarship

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan stresses the importance of higher education as well as giving back to the community. M.E.Ch.A's scholarship gives students who happen to be undocumented a chance to succeed.

[*www.csus.edu/org/mecha/*](http://www.csus.edu/org/mecha/)

Davis-Putter Scholarship

The first and most important qualification for a Davis-Putter Scholarship is active participation in struggles for civil rights, economic justice, international solidarity or other progressive issues. They also evaluate the applicant's financial need and ability to perform academically at the college level. Davis-Putter scholars are both graduate and undergraduate students and must be enrolled in an accredited school and receiving college credit for the time period covered by their grant. Although citizenship is not a consideration, applicants must be living in the United States and planning to enroll in school in the US in order to apply. There is a strong preference for grantees who plan on staying in the US and building the movement here. The maximum grant is \$10,000 and may be considerably smaller depending on the applicant's circumstances and the amount of funding available.

[*www.davisputter.org/apply/apply-for-scholarships/*](http://www.davisputter.org/apply/apply-for-scholarships/)

Dream Scholarship Fund

The Dream Scholarship Fund values the diversity and the contributions that immigrants and their families make to our society and economy. They understand that America is your home, you have been raised and educated as an American, and you would like to continue to make important contributions to America's culture and economy. The fund's purpose is to distribute several scholarships to offset the cost of tuition.

[*www.dreamscholarshipfund.com/applicants.html*](http://www.dreamscholarshipfund.com/applicants.html)

Los Hermanos de Stanford High School Scholarship

Los Hermanos de Stanford is committed to academic excellence, community service, and cultural awareness. The scholarship is awarded to high school seniors in order to help fund their college finances. We believe that cost should not be a factor in whether or not a student attends college. Applicants will be judged on their contributions to the aforementioned guiding principles of our organization: academic excellence, community service, and cultural awareness. The award is open to male and female applicants, and attending Stanford University is NOT a requirement.

www.stanford.edu/group/hermanos/cgi-bin/newHermanosSite/layout/template/main_layout.php

MALDEF DREAM Act Student Activist Scholarship

MALDEF offers a scholarship to support student leaders who have been outstanding advocates for the DREAM Act and all immigrant rights.

www.maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/index.html

National Association of Hispanic Journalists Scholarships

NAHJ offers scholarships for each school year to full-time undergraduate and graduate students pursuing careers in journalism in English or Spanish-language media, or both. The series of scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 have varying requirements and are open to students attending four-year and community colleges in the United States and Puerto Rico.

www.nahj12.com/scholarships/

National Press Club Scholarship for Journalism Diversity

The National Press Club, the leading professional organization for journalists, wants to recruit promising future journalists who will bring diversity to American journalism. The scholarship consists of a \$2,000 one-year scholarship, which can be renewed for up to three years at \$2,500 per year.

<http://press.org/about/students>

Princeton Prize in Race Relations

In order to recognize, support, and encourage the young people of our country who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing the cause of positive race relations, Princeton University sponsors an annual awards program for high school students (9th-12th)—the Princeton Prize in Race Relations. If you are a high school student involved in an activity that is helping to improve race relations in your school or community, we want to hear from you. The Princeton Prize in Race Relations consists of regionally awarded \$1,000 cash awards as well as an annual symposium on race.

[*www.princeton.edu/princetonprize*](http://www.princeton.edu/princetonprize)

SHPE Foundation Scholarship for Advancing Hispanic Excellence in Technology, Engineering, Math and Science

The SHPE Foundation Scholarship Program is designed to enhance and achieve the potential of Latino students pursuing degrees in technology, engineering, math and science. Merit-based and need-based scholarships are awarded, in the amount of \$1,000 - \$5,000, to deserving Latino/a high school graduating seniors, undergraduate students, and graduate students who demonstrate both significant motivation and aptitude for a career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

[*www.shpefoundation.org/scholarships/*](http://www.shpefoundation.org/scholarships/)
Email scholarships@shpe.org for more information

United States Institute of Peace National Peace Essay Contest

The National Peace Essay Contest is based on the belief that questions about peace, justice, freedom, and security are vital to civic education. Each year over 1,100 students submit entries to the essay contest. First-place state winners receive scholarships and are invited to Washington for a five-day awards program. The Institute pays for expenses related to the program, including travel, lodging, meals and entertainment. This unique five-day program promotes an understanding of the nature and process of international peacemaking by focusing on a region and/or theme related to the current essay contest. All high school students attending school in the United States regardless of citizenship, background, or ability are encouraged to participate in the contest.

[*www.usip.org/npec*](http://www.usip.org/npec)

APPENDIX A: IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND INFORMATION

The DREAM Act

Federal

The DREAM Act is a piece of federal legislation which would legalize the status of several million undocumented youth. The bill was first introduced in 2001 and has been re-introduced each session since then. If an undocumented youth met certain requirements, then they would then have up to 10 years to complete a two-year degree or enlist in the military for at least two-years in order to legalize their immigration status.

The federal DREAM Act has not passed yet. For more information and updates, visit <http://www.dreamactivist.org/>

State

The Pennsylvania DREAM Act was introduced by State Representative Tony Payton on June 20th, 2011. It would allow undocumented youth in Pennsylvania to pay in-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher education provided they meet certain requirements. If successful, Pennsylvania will become the 12th state to pass a state DREAM Act, joining states such as Illinois, Texas, and Maryland.

The PA DREAM Act has not passed yet. For more information and updates, visit <http://dreamactivistpa.org/> or connect with JUNTOS at <http://www.vamosjuntos.org/>

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Parts adapted from the Educators for Fair Consideration's 2012-2013 Financial Aid Guide for Undocumented Students p. 19

General Information

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is an administrative policy that will allow eligible undocumented students to receive a **two-year deferment of their deportation and work authorization**. To be eligible for DACA, individuals must:

- Be 15 or older. If individuals are in removal proceedings they can request Deferred Action before the age of 15.
- Have resided continuously in the U.S. for at least five years prior to June 15, 2012

- Have come to the U.S. before the age of 16
- Been present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012 and not left since that date, even for a casual visit abroad
- Either be currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a GED certificate (or equivalent), or have been honorably discharged as a veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States
- Have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, three (3) or more misdemeanor offenses, or otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety
- Be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012

Important Things to Know

- Deferred Action is not a visa or a legal status; it is a deferment by the government to pursue deportation/removal.
- Deferred Action does not provide a pathway to citizenship or any sort of legal status.
- If your request for DACA is rejected, you may be placed in removal proceedings if you fall under certain guidelines.
- There is no appeal process for a rejected request; however, an applicant may be able to file a new request.
- DACA does not guarantee you will be able to get a driver's license (this varies by state).

To view the DACA application forms and find out more information, please visit U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' website: [***www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals***](http://www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals).

You can also view the comprehensive DACA resources that E4FC has created: [***http://e4fc.org/legalservices/deferredactionresources.html***](http://e4fc.org/legalservices/deferredactionresources.html)

See also Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC)'s website: [***http://paimmigrant.org/***](http://paimmigrant.org/)

DACA Assistance/Legal Services/Green Card and Citizenship Assistance

HIAS Pennsylvania

2100 Arch Street
Call 215-832-0900
www.hiaspa.org

Esperanza Immigration Legal Services

4261 N 5th Street
Call 215-324-0746
www.esperanza.us

Juntos

2029 S 8th Street
Call 215-218-9079
www.vamosjuntos.org

Nationalities Service Center

1216 Arch Street, 4th Floor
Call 215-893-8400
www.nscphila.org

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

1617 JFK Boulevard
Call 215-557-2626
www.welcomingcenter.org

APPENDIX B: FOR PARENTS OF UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

Common Questions

Adapted from the Educator for Fair Consideration's How to Support College-Bound Undocumented Students: Advice for Parents Guide p.5

Can undocumented students go to college?

Yes. Although they face many financial limitations, undocumented students have the right to attend college and are just as capable of attending college as other students if they work hard.

Is it worth it for my child to go to college if he/she is undocumented?

With a college education your son/daughter has greater opportunities in finding jobs and internships. College can also expand your child's personal network of people which he/she can use to find different opportunities when he/she graduates from college. If living in the United States is no longer possible for an undocumented student, he/she can use his/her college degree to find jobs in another country.

Will going to college help my child get legal status?

If the DREAM Act is passed, then a college education may help your child obtain legal status. Assuming he/she qualifies for the bill, he/she would be able to qualify for permanent residency status when he/she completes two years of college (or military service). Depending on your child's immigration history and his/her academic focus, going to college may also be the first step in eligibility for certain employment-based visas.

What is the DREAM Act and how does it work?

The "DREAM Act" (or Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) is a proposed federal bill that, if passed, would offer undocumented students a path to legalization. In order to qualify for this bill, students must:

- Have entered the US before the age of 16
- Be between the ages of 12-35 at the time of application
- Have graduated from a US high school (or obtained a GED)
- Have been present in the US for at least five consecutive years prior to the enactment of the bill

- Have good moral character

If your child meets the above criteria and if the DREAM Act passes, he/she will have six years within which to complete two years of college or military service. Upon doing either, your child would then have the chance to adjust his/her conditional permanent residency to US citizenship. During the conditional permanent residency period, your child would be able to drive, work, get federal work-study, and partake in most activities as a legal resident except traveling abroad for lengthy periods (an aggregate of 365 days within 6 years) and receiving federal financial aid in the form of Pell Grants. Please remember that the DREAM Act is only *proposed* legislation. It has not been passed and is not part of US law yet.

My child is undocumented, but I'm afraid to tell him/her. When does he/she need to know?

While it may be difficult to tell your child about his/her immigration status, it is important for you to do so as early as possible. It is especially important that students know their immigration status well before they start the college application process. During senior year of high school, students apply to colleges and scholarships and should, therefore, be aware of their legal status because there will be scholarships and schools for which they might not be eligible. It is helpful for students to know their status even before their senior year so that they can plan ahead for scholarships. Before telling your son/daughter about his/her legal status, try to become educated about opportunities for undocumented students. It is very important for you to assure your child that, despite the limitations he/she will encounter as an undocumented student, there will still be many resources to help him/her complete his/her education.