

Supporting undocumented students in the college process

This article and linked resources will provide information and resources for PCs and mentors to best support undocumented students in the college process.

Click the link to jump to the specific section.

- [Who are undocumented students?](#)
- [Applying to college](#)
- [Paying for college](#)

Who are undocumented students?

By definition, an undocumented student or immigrant is someone who was born outside of the U.S. and is not a U.S. citizen or legal resident. Approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools each year but only a small fraction of these students go on to college because of legal and financial barriers to higher education. However, there are many resources available to support undocumented students in the college process.

This CollegeBoard article can help undocumented students understand their options when it comes to college: [6 Things Undocumented Students Need to Know about College](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-undocumented-students/6-things-undocumented-students-need-to-know-about-college) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-undocumented-students/6-things-undocumented-students-need-to-know-about-college>).

There are no federal laws that require high school or college administrators to inquire about a student's immigration status or report undocumented students. Students do not have to share their immigration status and they should only share it if they are comfortable. As a PC or mentor, you may learn about a student's status if he or she chooses to share this information with you. It is important to keep in mind that this is highly sensitive information and should remain confidential.

Applying to college

Many undocumented students incorrectly assume that they cannot legally attend college in the U.S. There is no federal law that prevents U.S. colleges from admitting undocumented students.

However, states have varying policies regarding the enrollment of undocumented students, in-state tuition, and state financial aid. PCs and mentors can support students by familiarizing

themselves with their state's laws and policies regarding undocumented students. Learn more about your state's specific laws and policies [here](http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/education-deep/) (<http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/education-deep/>) .

It's also important to note that colleges and universities will often have their own policies for admitting undocumented students, so advise students to research each college or university's policies too.

Paying for college

One of the biggest obstacles to higher education that undocumented students face is paying for college. Undocumented students are not eligible to receive federal financial aid, including grants, loans, or work-study, and they are often charged out-of-state tuition for state colleges or universities.

However, undocumented students may be eligible to receive nonfederal financial aid, such as institutional aid from a college or university and scholarships from nonprofits or private organizations. Advise students to research and confirm each school or scholarship-granting organization's policies for undocumented students.

There are also some states that have passed laws that allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition or receive state financial aid. PCs and mentors can support students by familiarizing themselves with their state's laws and policies regarding undocumented students.

Here are some resources to help undocumented students understand their options for paying for college:

- A short FAQ about paying for college as an undocumented student:[For Undocumented Students: Questions and Answers about Paying for College](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-undocumented-students/questions-and-answers-about-paying-for-college) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-undocumented-students/questions-and-answers-about-paying-for-college>)
- [Toolkit for Improving Access to Postsecondary Education for Immigrant Students](https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccess toolkit2a/) (<https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccess toolkit2a/>) : includes information on state laws and policies, financial aid and scholarship resources, and support and advocacy groups.
- [Basic Facts about In-State Tuition for Undocumented Immigrant Students](https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccess toolkit/eduaccess toolkit1/basic-facts-instate/) (<https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccess toolkit/eduaccess toolkit1/basic-facts-instate/>)
- [Map of Tuition Equity Laws and College Access for Undocumented Students](http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/education-deep/) (<http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/education-deep/>)
- [Map of states that provide In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students](http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/latest/measure/in-state-tuition-for-undocumented-students) (<http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/latest/measure/in-state-tuition-for-undocumented-students>)
- [CollegeBoard Repository of Resources for Undocumented Students](http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/Repository-Resources-Undocumented-Students_2012.pdf) (http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/Repository-Resources-Undocumented-Students_2012.pdf) : includes information on resources for undocumented students for several states

- Act on a Dream (by Harvard College) –scholarship list for undocumented students
(<http://www.actonadream.org/resources/scholarships/>)
 - MALDEF – scholarship resources for undocumented students
(<http://maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/>)
 - Resources on Financial Aid & Scholarships for Undocumented Students
(<https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/estimates-of-eligible-students/aid-scholarships-groups/>)
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