College and Beyond: Equal Education and Employment for Undocumented Students

College Guide for Undocumented Immigrant Students

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Introduction

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”
(Mahatma Gandhi)

This guide is designed to be a tool for undocumented students thinking about and applying to college. The following pages are filled with information and advice that will help make the college application process less stressful and more empowering. The only thing that is as important as equal access to education is equal access to information.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS GUIDE?

- **Undocumented young people** who have either entered the U.S. without a visa; have overstayed their visas; or who are in the process of acquiring legal status and are authorized to stay in the U.S. but do not yet have permanent residency (i.e. Deferred Action recipients)
- **Parents** who are helping their undocumented children with the college application process
- **Guidance Counselors**
- **Teachers**
- **Friends** who are helping each other through the college application process
- **Community advocates and service providers**

We hope that through greater access to information about the college application process, education beyond high school will be possible for each and every young person who dreams to attend.

“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”
(B.B. King)

*College and Beyond* is a project of Long Island Jobs with Justice’s Equal Education and Employment Campaign. Our campaign work is based on the premise that education and employment is a right and not a privilege. We work to empower students to advocate for themselves and we train guidance counselors and educators on the educational and employment opportunities for undocumented students living in New York so that they can more effectively support their students.
WHY GO TO COLLEGE?

Attending college can offer a variety of opportunities and experiences.

1.) **Learning important life-skills**
- Decision-making
- Living independently (if moving away to college)
- Personal responsibility
- Problem solving
- Speaking up for yourself
- Critical-thinking

2.) **Socializing and making new friends**
- Making friends with people from all over New York, the country and the world
- Taking classes with teachers in specialized topics
- Joining clubs
- Participating in athletics
- Attending school events (concerts, plays, cultural events, political events, art shows, etc.)

3.) **Self-discovery**
- New experiences
- New interests in activities and subjects
- New ways of learning information
4.) To build on and enhance the education you received in high school
Knowledge is power and with knowledge you can change the world by influencing people, communities, policies and laws.

5.) To create more opportunities for earning money
Even if you are undocumented and employment options are limited, having a college degree can expand your opportunities. One route is to pursue an advanced degree. Another is to apply for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program. This allows undocumented young people to receive work authorization. More information on the program can be found on page 17 of this guide.
There are many different types of schools that fit under the umbrella of higher education. Understanding the differences between them can be helpful when thinking about the type of college you want to, or are able to, attend. Let's take a look at them.

The U.S. higher education system is divided into public or private colleges and universities. The major difference between the two is how they are funded. As a prospective student, it is important to know how a school is funded because funding is tied to the cost of tuition. Public universities and colleges receive financial support from state governments in order to provide more affordable tuition costs. Private universities rely heavily on tuition and private contributions for their funding; they do not receive state funding. Public and private colleges and universities are also different in population size, degrees offered, campus culture, and environment. These are all important things to consider when thinking about what kind of college or university you want to go to.

There are many different kinds of public colleges and universities:

**Community Colleges** are schools that offer 2-year degrees. After graduating from a community college, some students transfer to a 4-year college or university for another 2-3 years to complete their bachelor’s degree.

**SUNY (State University of New York)** schools are public universities that are funded by New York State. SUNY schools offer 2-year and 4-year degrees, depending on the school. Nassau Community College and Suffolk County Community College are part of the SUNY system.

**CUNY (City University of New York)** schools are public colleges and universities that are funded by both New York State and New York City. CUNY schools are 2-year and 4-year degrees, depending on the school.
THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE

Long Island Schools

Questions to ask when thinking about schools

1. What is the school’s policy regarding undocumented students?
2. Is it a public or private school?
3. Is it a big, medium or small school?
4. How close is the school to home?
5. If you will be commuting everyday is there reliable public transportation?
6. How much is the cost of going to this school (tuition, housing, meal plan, etc.)?
7. What majors and minors does the school offer?
8. What is the social life like both on and off campus?
9. Which clubs and groups can you get involved in?

Note: While public colleges and universities are not required to ask for information regarding a student’s immigration status, private colleges and universities determine their own policies toward undocumented students. Call the school’s admissions office and ask about their policies toward undocumented students. If you are nervous about calling, ask a guidance counselor or a friend to ask for you.

Colleges and Universities on Long Island

Adelphi University - www.adelphi.edu
Briarcliffe College - www.briarcliffe.edu
Dowling College - www.dowling.edu
Five Towns College - www.fivetowns.edu
Hofstra University - www.hofstra.edu
Long Island University - www.liunet.edu
Nassau Community College - www.sunynassau.edu
New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) - www.nyit.edu
Saint Joseph’s College - www.sjcny.edu
SUNY Farmingdale - www.farmingdale.edu
SUNY Stony Brook - www.stonybrook.edu
SUNY Old Westbury - www.oldwestbury.edu
SUNY Empire State College - www.esc.edu/learning-centers/long-island
Suffolk County Community College www.sunysuffolk.edu
Touro College - www.tourolaw.edu
Webb Institute - www.webb-institute.edu
Molloy College - www.molly.edu
Sanford-Brown Institute - www.sanfordbrown.edu

For a complete list of all SUNY schools visit: www.suny.edu/student/campuses_complete_list.cfm

For a complete list of CUNY schools visit: www.cuny.edu/about/colleges.html

For a complete list of private colleges and universities in New York State visit: www.nycolleges.org/locate-colleges
US Customs and Border Protection are legally allowed to patrol within 100 miles of the U.S. and Canadian border.

The following SUNY schools are within the 100-mile radius:

- SUNY Buffalo
- SUNY Plattsburg
- SUNY Geneseo
- SUNY Brockport
- SUNY Potsdam

There have been no reported incidents of border patrol entering into college campus, however this does mean that they may have a presence in the surrounding town/city. So this may be a factor to consider for students who are not enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA).

SOME FACTORS TO CONSIDER
In order to apply for and go to college you must first get a high school diploma. People who do not complete high school can choose to get a GED.

What is a GED?
GED stands for General Educational Development. In order to get a GED diploma you must take a series of tests that cover the same subjects people study in high school. It includes five tests: Writing, Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies. The GED can be taken in English, Spanish or French. Those who choose to take the test in Spanish or French must also take an English proficiency test (ESL Test). A GED diploma is equivalent to a high school diploma; however, there are some schools that prefer their first-year students to have a high school diploma. This does not mean a GED is not a good option. It just means you should think about which option is a better choice for you.

If you need to retake the test, you must wait two months before retesting. For more information on the GED visit: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/ged/about_us.html

Colleges and universities also require that you take the SAT (Scholastic Achievement Test). Some schools require the ACT (American College Test), but this is usually only for specialized programs.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Plyler vs. Doe (1982) that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents!
Obtain and fill out the college applications for each school.

SUNY and CUNY schools all use the same application form and only require a one-time application fee to apply to all schools. Private schools on the other hand each have different application forms and fees. If you are interested in applying to multiple private schools, you must get an application form from each school. Many schools have their application forms posted online. Others might require you to call and request an application in the mail.

Every school has its own admission requirements. The essential application requirements are the following:

- Application form
- Application fee
- High school transcript and/or GED diploma
- SAT scores and ACT scores (if applicable)
- Personal statement letter and/or essays
- Letters of recommendation

It is very important that you ask your guidance counselor as many questions as necessary to complete your applications. They are there to help you through the process!

**IMPORTANT!**

- Undocumented students are not required to provide a social security number. Leave this space blank. **Never make up a number!** Those who receive a Social Security Number through the Deferred Action Program can use it as a valid number.
- ITINs (individual taxpayer identification number) are not social security numbers therefore it cannot be used when applying for admission. ITINs are strictly used for income tax purposes.
- Students should never lie about their immigration status. Write or select the options “none,” “not-qualified,” “non-citizen,” etc.
- Universities are only required to report information to immigration authorities about international students with student visas. **Students should never use information from an expired visa.** Universities are not required to report any information about students without immigration status.
QUALIFIED UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS LIVING IN NEW YORK ARE ELIGIBLE TO PAY IN-STATE TUITION AT ANY SUNY, CUNY OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE!

Qualifications:

1. Must have graduated from an approved New York State high school after at least two years of attendance OR attended an approved New York State program for GED
2. Applied for attendance at a SUNY, CUNY or community college within five years of receiving high school diploma or GED
3. Must file a notarized affidavit that must be mailed with application. A sample copy can be found on the next page of this guide.
4. Must provide college with a completed residency form and necessary documentation proving New York State residency for 12 months prior to the first day of classes.

The following U.S. states have passed in-state tuition laws that grant qualified undocumented students in-state tuition. Without these laws, undocumented students would be forced to pay international student tuition, which can be up to 5 times as much as in-state tuition!

Texas
California
Utah
Colorado
Minnesota
Oregon
Rhode Island*
Washington
Oklahoma
Illinois
Kansas
New Mexico
Nebraska
Wisconsin
Maryland
Connecticut
Massachusetts

To access the New York in-state tuition bill visit

In the event that a college or university rejects a student’s right to pay in-state tuition, a copy of the New York bill can be sent to the institution.

You can also call us at 631-348-1170 ext. 326 and we can assist by speaking with school personnel.
Undocumented students must provide the school with an “Affidavit of Intent.” This document simply states that the student currently does not have lawful immigrant status but will file to legalize their status as soon as they are eligible to do so. There is no deadline for this intent to file. Because the process of legalizing one’s immigration status can take many years, it is understandable that an undocumented student might not get the chance to file during their time in college. This is okay!

**Sample Affidavit:**

**Affidavit of Intent to Legalize Immigration Status**

______________________ (student’s name), being duly sworn, deposes and says that he/she does not currently have a lawful immigration status, but has filed an application to legalize his/her immigration status or will file such an application as soon as he/she is eligible to do so.

_____________________________ (student’s signature)

Sworn to me this _____ (day) of _________ (month) or _________ (year), State of New York, County of ___________.

**APPLYING TO COLLEGE**

**Tuition**
Paying for college is expensive, period! But because undocumented students cannot receive federal or state financial aid, paying for college can be even more difficult.

Don’t let this discourage you. There are many scholarships and grants out there that do not require an applicant to be a U.S. citizen or have a Social Security number. In fact, some public and private colleges and universities provide undocumented students with scholarship opportunities. Contact the school’s financial aid office to find out if they offer this.

**FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS – AM I ELIGIBLE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USC United States Citizen (holds a US Passport)</th>
<th>LPR Legal Permanent Resident (holds a Green Card)</th>
<th>Visa Holder (holds a valid visa)</th>
<th>Undocumented (holds no documents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Aid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Aid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-State Tuition</td>
<td>Yes, if you meet New York residency requirement to qualify</td>
<td>Yes, if you meet New York residency requirement to qualify</td>
<td>Depends on your visa</td>
<td>Yes, if eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Loans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Loans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, but need resident co-signer</td>
<td>Yes, but need resident co-signer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Grants</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Study</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Depends on visa you hold and if the school you attend is public or private</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>Depends on eligibility requirements of scholarship</td>
<td>Depends on eligibility requirements of scholarship</td>
<td>Depends on eligibility requirements of scholarship</td>
<td>Depends on eligibility requirements of scholarship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Undocumented students do not need to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) unless they are instructed to do so by the college or university, or if a scholarship requires it.

Refer to these useful tips in the event that you need to fill out the FAFSA:

- You are not required to fill in the Social Security Number space. Leave this blank.
  - Those who receive a Social Security Number through the Deferred Action Program can use it as a valid number.
- Never lie about their immigration status. Select the option “No, I am not a citizen or eligible noncitizen.”

For more information about the FAFSA visit:
http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/

IMPORTANT TIP:
Leaving the Social Security Number space blank on an online FAFSA will not allow you to move on to the next window. Write all zeroes to move on (000-00-000)
The following are a list of some scholarships that are available for undocumented students. There are many more scholarships out there so make sure you do additional research!

David-Putter Scholarship Fund

Scholarships for students activists committed to civil rights, economic justice, international solidarity and other progressive issues. [http://dpsf.davisputter.org/](http://dpsf.davisputter.org/)

MALDEF Scholarships

Scholarships that support the next generation of civil rights advocates for the Latino community. [www.maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/index.html](http://www.maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/index.html)

Myself Third: Spirit of New York Scholarship

Promotes the ideals of character, leadership and service, and honors college-bound students who engage in ongoing social action and volunteerism. [http://collegenow.cuny.edu/myself-third/](http://collegenow.cuny.edu/myself-third/)

Hispanic Scholarship Fund

As the nation’s leading Hispanic higher education fund, HSF works to address the barriers that keep many Latinos from earning a college degree. [http://www.latinocollegedollars.org/](http://www.latinocollegedollars.org/)

Long Island Jobs with Justice Fellowship for Undocumented Immigrant Students

Scholarships for passionate advocates of social justice who recognize the important role they can play in the lives of other students. Email lijwj01@gmail.com for scholarship application.

The Dream.us

A national scholarship fund for immigrant youth who have received DACA, who want to obtain a college education and give back to their communities. [https://www.scholarsapply.org/thedreamus/](https://www.scholarsapply.org/thedreamus/)

The New York State Youth Leadership Council

Una organización liderada por jóvenes indocumentados que ofrece becas tanto nacionales y estatales. [http://www.nysylc.org/scholarships/](http://www.nysylc.org/scholarships/)

Project Green Light

A blog that provides 26 “easy” scholarships which undocumented students are eligible for. [http://blog.collegegreenlight.com/blog/easy-scholarships-for-undocumented-students/](http://blog.collegegreenlight.com/blog/easy-scholarships-for-undocumented-students/)
PAYING FOR COLLEGE
Scholarships and Grants

Graduate Students

Many Graduate and Licensing Programs do not have specific requirements keeping undocumented students from participation. Many will accept students into their programs regardless of documentation status. If you are unsure, call and ask or have a friend do it for you. Here is a list in progress of resources for graduate students

MALDEF

Contains Graduate Scholarships and Law School Scholarships
http://www.maldef.org/leadership/scholarships/

Pre Health Internships

Contains internship opportunities for undocumented students entering the medical field
http://www.phdreamers.org/resources/prehealthinternships/

Remember: There are many more scholarships out there and you can apply for more than one!!
### Long Island College Scholarship Information

Many colleges on Long Island provide scholarships regardless of immigration status. If you are not sure, call the school or ask a friend or guidance counselor to call for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Do they provide scholarships to undocumented students?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelphi</td>
<td>516-877-3050</td>
<td>Yes. All students regardless of status are eligible for private and merit-based scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briarcliffe</td>
<td>516-918-3600</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowling College</td>
<td>631-244-3000</td>
<td>Yes, all students are eligible for merit-based scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hofstra</td>
<td>800-463-7872</td>
<td>Yes. All students are eligible for all merit-based scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYIT</td>
<td>516-686-1000</td>
<td>Yes. All students are eligible for all merit-based scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Farmingdale</td>
<td>631-420-2000</td>
<td>Yes. Unless a scholarship specifies citizenship, all students are eligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Westbury</td>
<td>516-876-3000</td>
<td>Yes. The “Resident’s Hall” Scholarship is available to all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Stony Brook</td>
<td>631-632-6000</td>
<td>Yes. All students are eligible for all academic and merit based scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Empire</td>
<td>518-587-2100</td>
<td>Only to Deferred Action students because they need to process a valid FASFA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk Community College</td>
<td>631-451-4110</td>
<td>Yes. All students are eligible for all merit-based scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touro</td>
<td>631-665-1600</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb Institute</td>
<td>516-671-2213</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molloy</td>
<td>516-323-3000</td>
<td>Yes, all students are eligible for all merit based scholarships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two different kinds of DREAM Acts: federal DREAM Act and state DREAM Acts.

The federal DREAM Act is citizenship bill. It is a piece of legislation that would legalize the status of several million undocumented youth. The bill was first introduced in 2001. In 2010, the federal DREAM Act passed in the House, but unfortunately failed by 5 votes in the Senate.

**Dream Act = Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act**

The federal DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship for those undocumented students who meet the following qualifications:

- Have lived in the US for five or more consecutive years prior to the passing of the act
- Entered the US at the age of 15 or younger
- Are 29 years old or younger
- Graduated from a US high school or received a GED
- Have demonstrated good moral character

Upon graduating high school, or receiving a GED, students could apply for conditional legal residence and have to up 6 years to complete one of the following requirements in order to obtain lawful permanent residence (green card status):

- Graduate from a 2-year college; or
- Complete 2 years towards a 4-year degree; or
- Serve in the US military for 2 years
After Congress failed to pass the federal DREAM Act in 2010 – that left over 2 million undocumented young people without a path to citizenship – undocumented student activists and their allies in New York State took action and pushed for legislation that would ensure equal access to higher education for undocumented students.

While individual states cannot make changes to national immigration law, they can make changes to how states provide access to state-funded institutions, like schools.

If passed, the New York State DREAM Act would provide undocumented students with equal access to state funded financial aid (Tuition Assistance Program – TAP) to help pay for college.

In order to qualify, undocumented students must meet the following requirements:

- Have lived in New York for 2 or more consecutive years prior to the passage of the act
- Entered the US at the age of 17 or younger
- Are 34 years old or younger
- Graduated from a New York high school or received a GED
- Meet requirements for Tuition Assistance Program
- Have demonstrated good moral character
On June 15, 2012, President Obama announced an executive order granting Deferred Action to millions of undocumented young people currently living in the United States. Deferred Action for Children Arrivals (DACA) defers the deportation of a qualified young person who would otherwise be eligible for deportation; grants 3 years of legal status through work authorization (with unlimited renewal); grants a Social Security Number and card; and allows for travel outside of the US (with pre-approval).

On November 20th, 2014, President Obama made some changes to DACA as part of his Administrative Relief initiative, and also created the DAPA Program (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability). The changes are updated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deferred Action Program</th>
<th>Administrative Relief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 15, 2012</td>
<td>November 20th, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Came to the United States before the age of 16 (15 or younger)
- Continuously lived in the United States for at least five years before announcement of deferred action (June 15, 2007 - June 15, 2012) and are present in the United States on the date of the announcement (June 15, 2012)
- Are currently enrolled in school (or GED program), have graduated from a United States high school, have obtained a GED, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States
- Were under the age of 31 (30 or younger) on June 15th, 2012
- Subject to renewal every 2 years

- Came to the United States before the age of 16 (15 or younger)
- Continuously lived in the United States since January 1st, 2010 and are present in the United States on the date of the announcement (November 20th, 2014)
- Are currently enrolled in school (or GED program), have graduated from a United States high school, have obtained a GED, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States
- No Age limit
- Subject to renewal every 3 years
- Includes a DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability) program for parents of U.S. citizens or permanent residents born before November 20th, 2014

While DACA and DAPA have many benefits, it is not without risks. It is important to know these risks if you are thinking about applying.
- Because DACA is not a federal law, it can be terminated at any time by the president.
- Application information notifies the Department of Homeland Security of the immigrants presence in the US, potentially exposing him/her to future removal proceedings
- An applicant who is denied application may be immediately eligible for removal proceedings

For more information on DACA and to get copies of the application forms visit the USCIS website at:
http://www.uscis.gov/immigrationaction
We hope this guide offered you some useful information and advice for your college consideration and application process. It is a work-in-progress and is always being updated. If you still have questions after reading this, please do not hesitate to contact us.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
(Nelson Mandela)

Guide created by Anita Halasz and Victoria Daza, Long Island Jobs with Justice