

ADVICE FOR BAY AREA COLLEGE COUNSELORS WORKING WITH UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

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For more information about E4FC, please visit us online at www.E4FC.org.

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I. GENERAL STRATEGIES

A. Outreach Widely

- Make sure students know **YOU** are supportive of undocumented students. Talk openly about the issue to all students.
- Don't ask undocumented students to self-identify. Make sure information is readily available to **ALL** students.
- Many undocumented students don't know they are undocumented, or may not label themselves as undocumented.
- Undocumented students come from all over the world (they aren't only Latino students). Don't make assumptions based on race, ethnicity, or country of origin.
- If families are present, make sure to have a student or staff person who can translate information.
- E4FC has a documentary film (Don't Stop Me Now) that profiles four undocumented students who dream of going to college in the US. This film can be used to create awareness about undocumented students in your schools. Find out more about the film here: <http://e4fc.org/documentaryfilm.html>

B. Most Important Things to Tell Undocumented Students

- State **EXPLICITLY** that immigrant students who are not citizens or permanent residents **CAN** go to college but **SOME** options will be not be available to them.
- Thousands of undocumented students are going to college right now!
- Students who have attended high school in California for three or more years **AND** graduated from a California high school (or gotten a GED) are eligible for in-state tuition. See information about AB-540 in Section II.A.
- Undocumented students are **NOT** eligible for government-based financial aid, including loans, grants, and work study jobs.
- Undocumented students **CANNOT** fill out the FAFSA online (if colleges require it, they can fill it out on paper and mail it in).

- Students will need to get funding from private sources (scholarships and private college grants). Students must plan ahead and apply early.
- Private colleges will often consider students as international students and will be “need aware.”

C. Create College Lists

- Undocumented students with significant financial need should consider going to a community/2-year college first, and then transferring to a four-year to save money. Many bright, talented, and ambitious students choose this option!
- Require undocumented students to apply to a local CSU, if only as a backup.
- The cheapest four-year option will often be living at home and commuting to school.
- If students have family members living in other parts of the state/country, they may be able to attend nearby schools and live off-campus for less money.
- Many Bay Area students consider UC Santa Cruz and UC Davis as “semi-local.” We know students who commute by CalTrain and BART 5+ hours daily!
- If students are very strong academically, they can apply to private schools that have more “friendly” policies towards undocumented students: i.e. Santa Clara University, Mills College, Occidental College, Claremont McKenna College, and Bryn Mawr College. Results are varied and unpredictable with private schools. See information about financial aid opportunities at private colleges in Section III.C.

D. Arrange Individual Meetings With Parents

- If possible, meet individually with each undocumented student **and** his/her family.
- Discuss **in detail** the complexities surrounding the student’s college application process.

E. Connect to Students to Campus Organizations / Groups

- Encourage students to contact undocumented student groups at the colleges they are considering attending (i.e. RISE at UC Berkeley, IDEAS at SF State, SIN at UC Santa Cruz, SPEAK at UC Davis, SAHE at San Jose State University, IDEAS at UCLA, etc.).

II. INSTRUCTIONS ON APPLICATION / FINANCIAL AID FORMS

A. Privacy Concerns

- Students do **NOT** need to worry about revealing their immigration status when filling out admissions or financial aid applications.
- Federal Education and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student records at educational institutions, including colleges and universities.
- These protections are the same for **ALL** public as well as private institutions.

B. AB 540 – California Nonresident Tuition Exemption

- AB-540 allows **certain** undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at UCs, CSUs, and Community Colleges
- Basic AB540 requirements:
 - a. Student must have attended a high school (public or private) in California for **three** or more years,
 - b. Student must have **graduated** from a California high school or attained equivalent (GED),
 - c. Student without lawful immigration status must file an affidavit stating that he or she has filed (or will file) an application to legalize as soon as he or she is eligible to do so
- Recently arrived students should consider options to remain in high school at least three years in order to meet AB540 requirements
- Instructions and application for students applying for AB-540 status: http://e4fc.org/images/2008_California_Nonresident_Tuition_Exemption.pdf
- AB 540 forms are worded in a way so as to protect undocumented students from having to declare their status (they are grouped with US citizens and permanent residents). The affidavit says "**IF**" they are an "alien without lawful immigration status," then they will pursue a means to change their immigration status when it becomes available.

- Help students fill out the correct box on the form. **It's confusing.** Below is the wording for the box they check on the form and the affidavit they sign:

"I am NOT a nonimmigrant alien. [U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or aliens without lawful immigration status, among others, should check this box.]

AFFIDAVIT:

I, the undersigned, declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the information I have provided on this form is true and accurate. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility for the nonresident tuition exemption for eligible California high school graduates. I hereby declare that, if I am an alien without lawful immigration status, I have filed an application to legalize my immigration status or will file an application as soon as I am eligible to do so. I further understand that if any of the above information is untrue, I will be liable for payment of all nonresident charges from which I was exempted and may be subject to disciplinary action by the College or University."

- Each school processes these forms differently, so students should contact their individual schools to find out the exact process.

C. Instructions for Students Applying to UCs

- The following information is requested but **not** required and UC applications **will** be processed without it: Social Security Number, Country of Citizenship, Country of Permanent Residence, Immigration Status, and State of Legal Residence of Parent/Legal Guardian.
- The Country of Citizenship question **CANNOT** be left blank. If students do not wish to answer, they should select "No Selection" (at the top of the drop-down list after "United States").
- The application form also requires applicants to answer the following residency questions:
 - a. Have you lived in California for at least the last 12 months?
 - b. If you are under 18, does your parent or legal guardian live in California?
 - c. Is your parent, legal guardian or spouse an employee of UC?
 - d. Is your current/most recent school a California high school, or have you attended a California high school for two or more years? Or, for transfer

applicants: Is your current/most recent school a California college, or did you attend a California high

An applicant is considered a bona fide California resident for admissions eligibility purposes if the student answers “Yes” to any one of the residency questions.

- Students who qualify as bona fide California residents may be granted an undergraduate admission application fee waiver provided they meet the income and family size criteria similar to the National School lunch program eligibility.
- Students should be advised that a resident classification for admissions purposes does not guarantee a resident classification for tuition purposes. For example, in order for a student to be eligible for exemption from nonresident tuition, the student must have attended high school in California for three or more years. The Residency Deputy on the campus where the student plans to enroll will determine the student’s enrollment fees.
- Counselors who need additional assistance in advising prospective applicants regarding the admissions application process should contact Susan Wilbur at (510) 987-9565 or at susan.wilbur@ucop.edu.

D. Don’t Lie About Citizenship

- Undocumented students who lie about their citizenship will likely have their admissions acceptances revoked.

III. FINANCING OPTIONS

A. Focus on Four-Year Plan

- Help students plan for the cost of the **entire** 4-5 years of college.
- Walk through **total** costs related to school: tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation.
- Walk through **several** calculations and scenarios.
- Make a college decision based on what is a **viable** solution for each student and his/her family.

B. Scholarships

- Check out E4FC's List of Scholarships for Students Without Social Security Numbers: http://e4fc.org/images/E4FC_Scholarships_NOSSN.pdf
- Strongly encourage students to apply to every single scholarship they can.
- Find as many scholarships as possible (especially local ones) that do not require citizenship, and encourage students to put **A LOT** of time and energy into these applications.
- Research and apply to scholarships **EARLY** – in the fall!
- Make sure students are explicit in talking about their financial need.
- Call scholarship funds to figure out their attitudes/policies towards undocumented students. Knowing scholarship funds' attitudes can help students determine how they should address their immigration status in their application.
- If scholarships ask for SSN, make sure this is a **requirement** (i.e. students **must** be citizens or permanent residents). FYI, scholarship funds do **not** need to list students' SSN for tax purposes!

C. Contact Private Colleges on an Individual Basis

- Contact private schools individually to find out their policies towards undocumented students

- Admission offices may be helpful. Often the Multicultural Student Representative and/or International Student Representatives will be familiar with issues related to undocumented students.
- Financial aid offices are usually more helpful. Speak to a financial aid director or counselor directly.
- Mention that you are currently working with an undocumented student who is very interested in their school specifically.
- Often you will have to speak with **several different people** within one school before getting the right information.
- Sample questions to ask private schools:
 - a. Do you offer any institutional scholarships for undocumented students? What about private scholarships?
 - b. What are the names of these scholarships and how much money do they provide?
 - c. Are these scholarships only for incoming freshman?
 - d. Do you have any scholarships for transfer students?
 - e. What is the application process for these scholarships? Deadlines, essays, letters of recommendation, etc.?
 - f. Do you require that the student submits a paper FAFSA?
 - g. Are there certain qualifications needed to apply for these scholarships, i.e. like certain GPA, SAT/ACT scores or community service requirements?
 - h. Are these scholarships good for the entire time the student is at your school? What if it takes them 5 years to graduate?
 - i. What does the student need to do to keep the scholarship?
 - j. Can they lose the scholarship money if they get poor grades?
 - k. Is there a website or brochure outlining more information about these scholarships?
 - l. How will the student know if they are awarded one of these scholarships?
 - m. Anything else we should know when helping undocumented students apply to your schools?

D. Private Sponsors

- Many teachers/counselors have been able identify private donors to fund (or partially fund) their students' schooling. Don't be afraid to ask!

A. E4FC'S Scholarship Sub-funds

- E4FC may be able to help if you want to start a scholarship fund for undocumented students at your school or organization.
- Some questions to consider:
 - a. How many students would you like to support?
 - b. Do you already know the specific students you want to support?
 - c. If yes, did these students apply for E4FC's New American Scholars Program this year?
 - d. How much scholarship money do you hope to award to each student?
 - e. When would you like to award these scholarships, i.e. for the upcoming academic year or future years?
 - f. Have you raised any money to date? If so, how much?
 - g. Do you have any donors who have already offered their support?
- Contact Katharine Gin if you want to discuss this (kathy@e4fc.org).

B. Long-term Savings – Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

- Undocumented students are eligible for matched savings programs, aka Individual Development Accounts (IDA).
- IDAs allow students to get \$2 for every \$1 they save. So, if they save \$2,000, then they get a total of \$6,000!
- IDAs also offer/require students to complete financial management courses.
- See Opportunity Fund's IDA program as example: <http://www.opportunityfund.org/about/our-programs/ida>

C. Jobs

- Discourage students from using fake SSNs, as this will be considered fraud and could hurt them if they ever have options to apply for legalize.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Exploring Possible Immigration Remedies

- Make sure to speak with your student's family **FIRST** to find out if your student is **ALREADY** in a process to legalize and what options have been explored.
- Refer students to E4FC's Immigration Case Analysis. This online service offers free, personalized analysis of possible immigration remedies for immigrant students nationwide. Visit E4FC's website for more information: <http://e4fc.org/onlineresources/caseanalysis.html>
- If the student **DOES** have an immediate immigration remedy, refer them to trusted legal service agencies who can help with the application process (i.e. Immigration Legal Resource Center, Asian Law Caucus, Catholic Charities, etc.).
- Warn students about the dangers of using "notarios" as some of them might not have adequate legal training.

B. Students Applying to Graduate School

- Check out the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT). They offer amazing financial aid and support to minority students (regardless of citizenship/residency) who want to pursue graduate studies and ultimately assume faculty positions in higher education. Visit: <http://www.andover.edu/SummerSessionOutreach/IFROTeachers/Pages/default.aspx>

C. DREAM Act

- Check out DREAMActivist (www.dreamactivist.org) and the National Immigration Law Center (www.nilc.org) for the latest updates on what's happening with the DREAM Act. Find out how you can help get this important legislation passed!

D. Thank People Who Support Undocumented Students

- Many people – elected officials, university chancellors, etc. -- are speaking out publicly in support of undocumented students. Make sure they know you support their efforts!

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