

Resource Guide to Support Undocumented Students

A Guide for Public Higher Education Practitioners in Tennessee



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Introduction

"An **undocumented student** is a foreign national who: (1) entered the United States without inspection or with fraudulent documents; (2) entered legally as a nonimmigrant but then violated the terms of his or her status and remained in the United States without authorization; (3) has Deferred Action Childhood Arrival ("DACA") status or has previously had DACA; or (4) is otherwise currently in the process of legalizing" (Immigrants Rising, 2022, p. 1).

Despite most having lived in the U.S. for the majority of their lives and attending school as children in the U.S. (Immigrants Rising, 2022), undocumented students face a multitude of challenges in their journeys to higher education. Fluctuating laws and policies at both the state and federal level, public hostility toward their very existence, lack of access to federal (and in many cases, state) financial aid, and anxiety surrounding their families' status are some of the primary challenges that these students face that most others do not (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Additionally, while undocumented students are guaranteed access to free K-12 education via the 1982 ruling in *Plyer v. Doe*, many students' educational aspirations become more complex and difficult to navigate due to the varying state laws and policies regarding enrollment to higher education institutions, and especially access to any form of financial aid (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). Systemic poverty, which leaves many of these students to work difficult jobs in order to both support their families and their educational aspirations, often leaves students with only the choice to attend more affordable educational options

such as community college, even when this option is an under-match for students (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). Ballerini and Feldblum (2021) highlight additional barriers that many institutional staff and administrators are not aware of: fear of deportation keeping students from using support services, non-DACA recipients being unable to obtain a driver's license or work authorization, the psychological burden of undocumented status often becoming a new reality for students in adulthood. Because of the many barriers and challenges that this group of students face, support from institutional staff is imperative to promoting student success. Student participants in the Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) study indicated that in order to create an "Undocufriendly Campus," faculty and staff must understand undocumented students and educate providers campus-wide, provide resources and assistance to undocumented students, and publicly endorse students in solidarity and support. This document is intended to address these requests by students in order to create a supportive, safe, and equitable campus environment for undocumented students.

Undocumented Students by the Numbers

427,300+ Undocumented Students in Higher Education

181,600+ are DACA-eligible

(Presidents Alliance & New American Economy, 2021)

**98,000+ Undocumented Students Graduating from High
School Annually**

(Batalova & Zong, 2019)

**49% of Undocumented Students Who Graduate High School
Continue to Higher Education**

71% of US-born residents persist

(Abrego & Gonzales, 2010)

Overview of Undocumented Students

Below is a list of resources with overviews of undocumented student metrics, the history of DACA, and federal policies and laws.

Overview

[Overview of Undocumented Students](#)

[DACA and Dreamers: What You Need to Know](#)

[Original DACA terms](#)

[History of DACA and Where It Stands](#)

[DACA Update: What You Need to Know](#)

Federal Policies Affecting Undocumented Students

[Plyer v Doe, 1982 – Undocumented Students Guaranteed K-12 education](#)

[Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act \(IIRIRA\), 1996– Undocumented Students Deemed Ineligible for In-State Tuition](#)

[Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, 1996 – Solidified No Public Benefits for Non-Qualified Immigrants](#)

Tennessee Landscape



Tennessee Board of Regents

Undocumented students cannot establish domicile in Tennessee for in-state tuition purposes

(Tennessee Board of Regents, 2022)



Tennessee EVEA

The Tennessee Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act requires substantial proof of legal residence in Tennessee in order to receive public benefit, including financial aid.

(Tennessee Tech University, n.d.)



Undocumented Individuals in Tennessee

There are more than 130,000 undocumented individuals living in Tennessee, with more than 7,600 active DACA recipients.

(American Immigration Council, 2020)

General Support

Below is a list of general and quick resources for both practitioners and undocumented students. These are meant to be a general guide, and are not subject-specific.

For Practitioners

[Directory of Presidents' Alliance Resources to Support DACA recipients, Undocumented Students, Dream Legislation, and Institutions of Higher Education](#)

[Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth \(US Dept. of Education\)](#)

[UndocuAlly Training](#)

[Top 10 Ways to Support Undocumented Students](#)

[Webinar: Uplifting Campus Resources: Effective Practices to Support Undocumented Students in Higher Education](#)

[For Educators: Supporting Undocumented Students & Their Families](#)

[How can your college or university protect & support undocumented students?](#)

[Beyond DACA: An Updated Checklist for Campuses to Support Undocumented Campus Members](#)

[Effectively Supporting Black Undocumented Students Through Higher Education](#)

[Increasing Inclusivity for Undocumented Asian Pacific Islander \(API\) Students on Your Campus](#)

For Undocumented Students

[Resources for current Undocumented College Students](#)

[Resource Guide for Undocumented Students](#)

[My Undocumented Life Resource Website](#)

Financial Aid

Below is a list of resources regarding financial aid opportunities for undocumented students. This is meant to address the financial barriers these students face due to lack of federal aid, state aid in Tennessee, and the stipulation to pay out-of-state tuition.

For Practitioners

[Higher Education Guide to Funding Opportunities for Undocumented Students](#)

[Fellowships & Scholarships: Creating Inclusive Eligibility Requirements for Undocumented Students](#)

[Creating Fellowship Programs: For Educational Institutions](#)

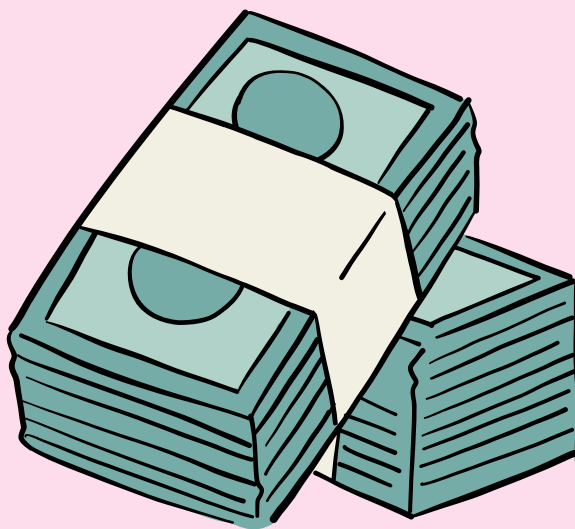
[Including Undocumented Students in Tuition-Free Community College Proposals](#)

For Undocumented Students

[Financial Aid Guide for Undocumented Students](#)

[List of Scholarships and Fellowships](#)

[TheDream.US Scholarships](#)



Career Counseling

Below is a list of resources to aid practitioners in counseling undocumented students in career-related matters. Because students without DACA are not typically authorized to work in the United States, this guide can help practitioners navigate many of the barriers that students face.

For Both Practitioners and Undocumented Students

[Career Counseling Support for Undocumented Students](#)

[Employment Guide for Dreamers](#)

[Dreamer-Friendly Companies](#)

[Entrepreneurship Resources](#)

[Income and Career Options for Undocumented Students: How College Can Help \(Webinar\)](#)

[Paid and Unpaid Opportunities for Undocumented \(Non-DACA\), DACA, & TPS](#)



On-Campus and Online Resource Examples

Below is a list of resources offered by various institutions in the United States. Some campuses have established on-campus centers to support undocumented students, and some campuses have simply incorporated online resources pages for students. Utilize these examples and the guides below to create a support system for undocumented students appropriate to your institutional context.

On-Campus Supports

[University of Texas, San Antonio Dreamers Resource Center](#)

[UC Davis AB540 and Undocumented Student Center](#)

Resource Pages

[University of Washington Undocumented Student Resource Page](#)

[Tennessee Tech DACA Resource Page](#)

Building On-Campus Support

[Dreamer Advocacy ToolKit](#)

[Developing a Strong Undocumented Student Task Force on Your Campus](#)

[A Guide to Building On-Campus Undocumented Student Programs](#)

[Conference Presentation: Campus, State, and Federal Advocacy Session: Action Steps for Staff, Faculty, and Administrators](#)

Legal Resources

Below is a list of legal resources, related to immigration laws, DACA renewals, travel, and what to do if there is an ICE raid or site visit.

For Practitioners

[FAQs on ICE Raids and Site Visits](#)

[FAQs for Campuses on Immigration Enforcement and Site Visits](#)

For Undocumented Students

[How to Find an Immigration Lawyer](#)

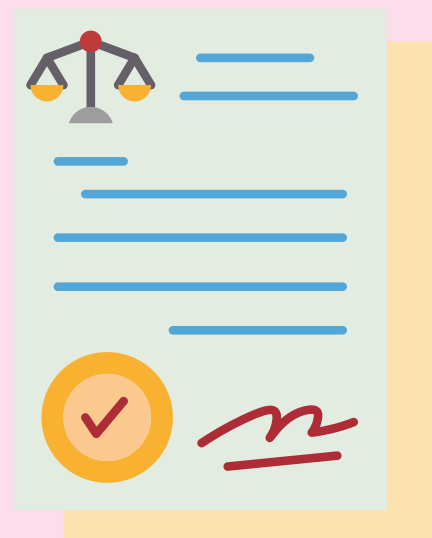
[How to Renew Your DACA in 2023](#)

[Help for People in Detention or Facing Deportation](#)

[Guide for Undocumented Individuals Traveling in the U.S.](#)

[Traveling with Advance Parole in 2023](#)

[Beyond DACA: Immigration Options Every Undocumented Person Should Know](#)



Conclusion

With these resources, you are now equipped with tools to help support and advocate for undocumented students at your institution. Below is a recap of ways you can help support your students:

Financial Aid

Ensuring that your students have resources to financial aid sources are imperative to showing support, especially when cost is a prominent barrier for educational access. This can be done by advocating for institutional aid and providing resources to students to find external aid.

Career Counseling

Because many undocumented students do not have work authorization, providing opportunities at your institution that does not require work authorization such as fellowships shows solidarity to your students. Additionally, providing them with resources to find companies and opportunities that are open to their status is a way to show continued career support upon graduation.

Campus Support

If your institution has the capacity to create an on-campus center or support area for undocumented students, this is a sure way to ensure that students feel seen and included on campus. If this is not feasible at your institution, however, creating an undocumented student resource page should be of utmost importance to guide students to success. Use this resource guide to help you get started.

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https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising_Overview-of-Undocumented-Students.pdf

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<https://www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Undocumented-Students-in-Higher-Education-Updated-March-2021.pdf>

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<https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/policy-classifying-students-state-out-state-paying-college-or-university-fees-tuition>.

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