



Tip Sheet for Undocumented Students

Undocumented students face unique challenges in their quest to obtain postsecondary education. This tip sheet is designed to help this population with some of the pressing questions they have while contemplating whether or not they can enroll in school.

Question

Answer

1. I just finished high school and want to go to college. Will the fact that I am an undocumented student prevent me from continuing my education?

Generally speaking, your status will not prevent you from being admitted to college or a vocational program, or from enrolling in classes. Your status as an undocumented student limits the type of financial aid you receive and could impact your tuition charges (See Questions 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 below).

2. I am an undocumented student, but I have lived in the U.S. since I was three years old. Am I eligible for financial aid to help pay for college?

As an undocumented student, you are not eligible for federal financial aid such as Federal Pell Grants, Federal Work-Study, and Federal Direct Student Loans (Direct Loans). However, you may be eligible for financial aid from other sources, including your college and private organizations.

3. I was born in the U.S. but my parents are undocumented. How does my parents' status affect my eligibility for federal financial aid?

As a U.S. citizen, you are eligible to receive federal financial aid, regardless of your parents' status. However, their status will prevent them from borrowing a parent PLUS to help pay your college expenses. For more information about how this affects your eligibility for federal student aid, contact the financial aid office at your school.

4. I am an undocumented student but I have lived in Kansas since my family came to the U.S. when I was six. I will graduate from high school soon. If I attend a public college in Kansas, am I eligible for in-state tuition?

Yes. 12 states have enacted legislation which allows undocumented students who meet certain qualifications to be charged lower in-state tuition at some or all public postsecondary institutions in the state. The states which have enacted such legislation are: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

5. If I live in a state which allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, do I have to do anything to be eligible to receive this benefit?

Common criteria for undocumented students to receive in-state tuition in certain states include: attending a state high school for two to four years, earning a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) in the state, enrolling in a public postsecondary institution in the state, and filing an affidavit stating intent to legalize status and become a permanent resident. Check with the college you plan to attend about the criteria in your state.

Question

Answer

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- 6. I know that a few states allow undocumented students to be charged lower in-state tuition. Are there any states which have laws prohibiting undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition?**
- Yes. Four states—Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, and Indiana—have enacted legislation which prohibits undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition at public postsecondary institutions in those states.
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- 7. As an undocumented student, what type of financial aid is available from the college I plan to attend?**
- The aid available to undocumented students from colleges and other postsecondary schools varies widely among institutions. Aid could include institutional scholarships, grants, loans, and work programs. Institutional scholarships often come with a merit component. To find out what is available at the college you plan to attend, contact the financial aid office.
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- 8. As an undocumented student, I know I am not eligible for financial aid from the federal government. Where can I look to find private scholarships?**
- Here are some websites you can use to research scholarships:
- Fast Web: <http://www.fastweb.com>
 - Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund: <http://www.maldef.org>
 - Get Ready for College: <http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=1586>
 - Latino College Dollars: <http://www.latinocollegedollars.org>
 - Scholarships for Hispanics: <http://www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org>
 - Genesco Migrant Center: <http://www.migrant.net>.
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- 9. Can I use my scholarship money to pay expenses other than tuition?**
- You can use financial aid to cover the following school expenses: tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, the cost of a computer, and personal expenses including transportation. You should check with the organization that awarded you a scholarship about any restrictions on its use.
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- 10. If I discuss my undocumented status with a counselor in the financial aid office at my school, is he or she required to report me to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)?**
- Financial aid counselors are not required by federal regulations to report undocumented students who seek counseling or other services from the financial aid office.

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