



EDUCATORS FOR FAIR CONSIDERATION

HOW TO SUPPORT COLLEGE-BOUND UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS: ADVICE FOR PARENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AND COLLEGE

- # Can undocumented students go to college?
- # Is it worth it for my child to go to college if he/she is undocumented?
- # Will going to college help my child get legal status?
- # My child is undocumented, but I'm afraid to tell him/her. When does he/she need to know?
- # What is the DREAM Act and how does it work?

CHAPTER 2 – GETTING INTO COLLEGE

- # My child doesn't have very good grades. Can he/she still go to college?
- # I didn't go to college in the US. What kind of support can I provide my children when they are applying to college?
- # How does the college application process work? What does my son/daughter need to do to get into college?
- # I am worried that colleges will find out that my child is undocumented and report him/her to ICE. Does my child need to tell colleges about his/her legal status?
- # Are there resources available to help cover the costs of taking college entrance exams, filing college applications, etc.?

CHAPTER 3 – PAYING FOR COLLEGE

- # How much does college cost?
- # What is in-state tuition?
- # I'm afraid I can't afford my child's education. What kind of financial assistance is available for undocumented students?
- # If my child is undocumented, can he/she still qualify for financial aid?
- # If my child is undocumented, is he/she eligible to receive loans?
- # I am undocumented, but my child is a US citizen. Will my status affect my son/daughter when he/she is applying for financial aid?
- # My child needs to work while he/she's in school. Is he/she able to work during the school year? How about while he/she's in college?
- # What's an internship?

CHAPTER 4 – SCHOLARSHIPS

- # Are undocumented students eligible for scholarships?
- # My child does not have very good grades. Can he/she still apply to scholarships?
- # I am worried that my son/daughter will have to provide information about his/her legal status when applying for scholarships. What kind of information do students have to provide?
- # My family's financial situation is not very good. Is that important? How will it affect my child when he/she is applying for scholarships?

CHAPTER 5 – LIFE DURING COLLEGE

- # What is a major?
- # Will my son/daughter be offered additional academic help if he/she needs it?
- # In my country, it is not customary for students to live on campus. Should I let my child live on campus? How important is it?
- # What is a meal plan?
- # Is the college campus safe?
- # What kind of transportation do colleges provide?

CHAPTER 6 – LIFE, EXPECTATIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES AFTER COLLEGE

- # I'm worried that my child will not be able to work after he/she graduates from college. What opportunities will my child have after college?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER 1 – UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AND COLLEGES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS GUIDE?

- # CAN UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE?
- # IS IT WORTH IT FOR MY CHILD TO GO TO COLLEGE IF HE/SHE IS UNDOCUMENTED?
- # WILL GOING TO COLLEGE HELP MY CHILD GET LEGAL STATUS?
- # MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED, BUT I'M AFRAID TO TELL HIM/HER. WHEN DOES HE/SHE NEED TO KNOW?
- # WHAT IS THE DREAM ACT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

CHAPTER 1 – UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AND COLLEGE

1. CAN UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE?

Yes. Although they face many financial limitations, undocumented students have the right to attend college in most states such as California and are just as capable of attending college as other students if they work hard.

2. IS IT WORTH IT FOR MY CHILD TO GO TO COLLEGE IF HE/SHE IS UNDOCUMENTED?

With a college education your son/daughter has greater opportunities in finding jobs and internships. College can also expand your child's personal network of people which he/she can use to find different opportunities when he/she graduates from college.

A college degree is also important since it can be useful to find job opportunities outside of the US. If living in the United States is no longer possible for an undocumented student, he/she can use his/her college degree to find jobs in another country.

3. WILL GOING TO COLLEGE HELP MY CHILD GET LEGAL STATUS?

If the DREAM Act is passed, then a college education may help your child obtain legal status. Assuming he/she qualifies for the bill (read more about eligibility requirements for the DREAM Act below), he/she would be able to qualify for permanent residency status when he/she completes two years of college (or military service).

Depending on your child's immigration history and his/her academic focus, going to college may also be the first step in eligibility for certain employment-based visas.

4. MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED, BUT I'M AFRAID TO TELL HIM/HER. WHEN DOES HE/SHE NEED TO KNOW?

While it may be difficult to tell your child about his/her immigration status, it is important for you to do so as early as possible.

It is especially important that students know their immigration status well before they start the college application process. During senior year of high school, students apply to colleges and scholarships and should, therefore, be aware of their legal status because there will be scholarships and schools for which they might not be eligible. It is helpful for students to know their status even before senior year so that they can plan ahead for scholarships, some of which students can apply to before senior year.

Before telling your son/daughter about his/her legal status, try to become educated about opportunities for undocumented students, including California's Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) which enables undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, and the federal DREAM Act (see below). It is very important for you to assure your child that, despite the limitations he/she will encounter as an undocumented student, there will still be many resources to help him/her complete his/her education.

5. WHAT IS THE DREAM ACT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

The "DREAM Act" (or Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) is a proposed federal bill that, if passed, would offer undocumented students a path to legalization. In order to qualify for this bill, students must:

- » Have entered the US before the age of 16
- » Be between the ages of 12-35 at the time of application
- » Have graduated from a US high school (or obtained a GED)
- » Have been present in the US for at least five consecutive years prior to the enactment of the bill
- » Have good moral character

If your child meets the above criteria and if the DREAM Act passes, he/she will have six years within which to complete two years of college or military service. Upon doing either, your child would then have the chance to adjust his/her conditional permanent residency to US citizenship.

During the conditional permanent residency period, your child would be able to drive, work, get federal work-study, and partake in most activities as a legal resident except traveling abroad for lengthy periods (an aggregate of 365 days within 6 years) and receiving federal financial aid in the form of Pell Grants.

Please remember that the DREAM Act is only proposed legislation. It has not been passed and is not part of US law yet. Visit <http://dreamact.info/> to get the most up-to-date information about the DREAM Act. To find out what you can do to support passage of the DREAM Act, visit www.dreamactivist.org.

CHAPTER 2 – GETTING INTO COLLEGE

- # MY CHILD DOESN'T HAVE VERY GOOD GRADES. CAN HE/SHE STILL GO TO COLLEGE?
- # I DIDN'T GO TO COLLEGE IN THE US. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN I PROVIDE MY CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE APPLYING TO COLLEGE?
- # HOW DOES THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK? WHAT DOES MY SON/DAUGHTER NEED TO DO TO GET INTO COLLEGE?
- # I AM WORRIED THAT COLLEGES WILL FIND OUT THAT MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED AND REPORT HIM/HER TO ICE. DOES MY CHILD NEED TO TELL COLLEGES ABOUT HIS/HER LEGAL STATUS?
- # ARE THERE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP COVER THE COSTS OF TAKING COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS, FILING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, ETC.?

CHAPTER 2 – GETTING INTO COLLEGE

1. MY CHILD DOESN'T HAVE VERY GOOD GRADES. CAN HE/SHE STILL GO TO COLLEGE?

When applying to four-year colleges, grades are very important. It is important that you encourage your child to do well in school and get good grades.

With some exceptions, applying to campuses of the University of California (UC) such as Berkeley or Santa Cruz requires at least a 3.0 GPA.

California State Universities (CSUs) such as San Jose State and San Francisco State have eligibility requirements with a sliding scale of necessary GPA and SAT/ACT scores. Students with lower GPAs will need to achieve higher SAT or ACT scores in order to gain admittance. You can view the matrix of these scores at http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high_school/cal_residents.asp.

Private schools are more flexible about GPA requirements since they strongly consider other factors. If a student has participated in a lot of extracurricular activities and community service, held leadership positions, or worked throughout high school, and has written a compelling personal statement, he/she may be competitive at certain private schools even if he/she does not have very good grades.

Undocumented students also have the option of attending a community college. Admission into a community college only requires a high school diploma or GED. At a community college, students can pursue an Associate's Degree -- for example, an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) -- or participate in a variety of Certificate Programs. Going to a community college can also help students who need to improve their academic performance and/or save money in order to transfer to a four-year university.

2. I DIDN'T GO TO COLLEGE IN THE US. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN I PROVIDE MY CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE APPLYING TO COLLEGE?

One way to help your children is to learn about how the college application process works. This is briefly explained in this section of the guide and you can also get information from their school counselor(s). If you have even a basic understanding of what they have to do to apply for college, you will be able to support them by providing emotional support and speaking to their high school counselor(s) to see they're doing. Ask them what they know about the college application process. Encourage them to find out as much information as possible. By showing that you care, you are already doing a lot.

You can also help your children by allowing them to become involved in different athletic, extracurricular, and/or community service activities that will enable them compete successfully for scholarships and college admissions. For example, they may decide to volunteer their time after school as tutors at the library. This will require them to spend additional time away from home. These kinds of activities are valued by colleges because they give students an opportunity to learn other skills, gain confidence, and experience responsibility. You can provide support and encouragement to your children by allowing them to participate in these kinds of activities and talking to them about what they have been doing and learning.

3. HOW DOES THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK? WHAT DOES MY SON/DAUGHTER NEED TO DO TO GET INTO COLLEGE?

The college application process really begins during the junior year of high school since that is when students typically begin studying for and taking the required college admissions tests, which may include the optional PSAT practice test, the SAT, ACT, and SAT subject tests. Most colleges require that students take the SAT or ACT tests, which students usually

take for the first time junior year and may retake senior year. Additionally, some schools require SAT subject tests. UC schools require two subject tests for the class graduating from high school in 2011; for younger classes, subject tests will only be required for certain selective programs, such as engineering. Selective private universities plan to continue requiring two subject tests for all applicants. These tests should be taken at the end of junior year when students complete relevant courses, although they can be taken senior year if necessary. Junior year is also a good time to begin looking for scholarships since there are some scholarships that are only available to juniors and others that students can apply to both junior and senior year to increase their chances.

Students typically work on their actual college applications in the fall of their senior year. The college application process is a long and arduous one. College applications require, among other things, essays, letters of recommendations, and transcripts. This process takes time since students need to write and revise various essays for different applications. For undocumented students this process can be more daunting because, unlike US citizens, they do not qualify for any government financial aid. They will need to find alternate sources of private funding, which are limited and highly competitive.

In order to be competitive for college and for scholarships, your child will need to work hard to maintain good grades, do community service every year of high school, and develop a good relationship with his/her teachers so they will write supportive letters of recommendation. If he/she decides to apply to private colleges, financial aid will be an important consideration in determining where he/she applies as well as where he/she decides to attend. Before even beginning the application process, he/she should determine which colleges are likely to give significant financial aid to undocumented students. A good starting point for this research is E4FC's list of Scholarships that Don't Require Social Security Numbers, which lists schools that have given substantial financial aid to undocumented students. See <http://www.e4fc.org/studentresources/scholarshiplists.html>.

4. I AM WORRIED THAT COLLEGES WILL FIND OUT THAT MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED AND REPORT

HIM/HER TO ICE. DOES MY CHILD NEED TO TELL COLLEGES ABOUT HIS/HER LEGAL STATUS?

You do not need to worry about your child revealing his/her immigration status when filling out admissions or financial aid applications.

The Federal Education and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student records at all educational institutions, including colleges and universities. These protections are the same for ALL public as well as private institutions.

However, it is important that students don't lie about citizenship. Undocumented students who are caught lying about their citizenship will likely have their admissions acceptances revoked.

Here are specific instructions for University of California applicants:

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 on the online application. If students do not wish to answer, they should select "No Selection" (at the top of the drop-down list after "United States").

The online application form also requires applicants to answer the following residency questions: 1) Have you lived in California for at least the last 12 months? 2) If you are under 18, does your parent or legal guardian live in California? 3) Is your parent, legal guardian or spouse an employee of UC?

Here are specific instructions for California State University applicants:

- » Students do not need to provide a Social Security Number (applicants will be assigned a Student ID Number for use in the application process and while attending the school).
- » Undocumented students should answer "None of the Above" for Citizenship Status.
- » Students should answer the following questions as accurately as possible: Country of Citizenship, State of Permanent Residence, and State of Parent's Permanent Home.

Any unanswered questions will result in processing delays for admission.

CSUs do not report the immigration status of applicants to anyone, nor do they deny admission based on immigration status.

Here are specific instructions for California Community College applicants:

- » Students do not need to provide a Social Security Number (applicants will be assigned a Student ID number once they apply).
- » Undocumented students should choose “Other” for Citizenship Status.
- » When asked about their visa status, undocumented students should check the box “No Documents”.
- » When providing high school information, students will be asked whether they attended high school in California for at least three years and will graduate/ have graduated. This is where CCCs will identify AB540 students.
- » CCCs do not report the immigration status of applicants to anyone, nor do they deny admission based on immigration status.

paying for transcripts, postage for items that need to be sent by mail, etc.

5. ARE THERE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP COVER THE COSTS OF TAKING COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS, FILING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, ETC.?

Yes. Students who are on the free or reduced price lunch program at school, which is available to low-income students regardless of whether they are undocumented, are eligible for numerous fee waivers. For example, they may receive 2 waivers for each of the college entrance exams (SAT, ACT, and SAT subject tests) and 4 waivers to cover the cost of applications to private colleges (additional waivers to private colleges may be granted directly by the schools themselves). Even students whose income is too high to qualify for the free lunch program may get fee waivers for applying to UCs, which can be obtained during the online application process by requesting a fee waiver and entering the student's family income. Students usually have to be responsible for other small costs associated with the college and scholarship process, such as

CHAPTER 3 – PAYING FOR COLLEGE

- # HOW MUCH DOES COLLEGE COST?
- # WHAT IS IN-STATE TUITION?
- # I'M AFRAID I CAN'T AFFORD MY CHILD'S EDUCATION. WHAT KIND OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS?
- # IF MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED, CAN HE/SHE STILL QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL AID?
- # IF MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED, IS HE/SHE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE LOANS?
- # I AM UNDOCUMENTED, BUT MY CHILD IS A US CITIZEN. WILL MY STATUS AFFECT MY SON/DAUGHTER WHEN HE/SHE IS APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID?
- # MY CHILD NEEDS TO WORK WHILE HE/SHE'S IN SCHOOL. IS HE/SHE ABLE TO WORK DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR? HOW ABOUT WHILE HE/SHE'S IN COLLEGE?
- # WHAT'S AN INTERNSHIP?

CHAPTER 3 – PAYING FOR COLLEGE

1. HOW MUCH DOES COLLEGE COST?

Average Cost of College in the United States (including personal expenses)

	Public 2-Year College (commuter)	Public 4-Year College		Private 4-Year College
		In-State	Out-Of-State	
Tuition & Fees	\$2,544	\$7,020	\$18,548	\$26,273
Books & Supplies	\$1,098	\$1,122	\$1,122	\$1,116
Transportation	\$1,445	\$1,079	\$1,079	\$849
Personal Expenses	\$1,996	\$1,974	\$1,974	\$1,427
Room & Board	\$7,202	\$8,193	\$8,193	\$9,363
Total/year	\$14,285	\$19,388	\$30,916	\$39,028

Source: The College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges, 2009

2. WHAT IS IN-STATE TUITION?

Public colleges charge more to students who live out of state than they do to those students who are residents of the state where the college/university is located. Only a handful of states allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. Texas, California, New York, Utah, Illinois, Washington, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas, have passed laws providing in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students who have attended high school in their states for three or more years.

In California, the law that allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition is called Assembly Bill 540 (or AB 540).

The requirements that students need to meet in order to qualify for in-state tuition are:

- » Attended high school in the state for three or more years
- » Graduated from a high school in the state or received the equivalent of a high school diploma, such as the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), in the state
- » Register as an entering student at an institution of higher education

In California, Texas, and Utah students must also:

- » File an affidavit with the institution of higher education stating that the student has filed an application to legalize his/her immigration status, or intends to file an application as soon as he/she is eligible to do so.

3. I'M AFRAID I CAN'T AFFORD MY CHILD'S EDUCATION. WHAT KIND OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS?

Undocumented students do not qualify for federal/state financial aid. However, there are other opportunities that help these students finance their education, such as scholarships, private loans, in-state tuition, and fellowships for graduate school. The following table provides more detailed information on the eligibility of immigrant students for financial aid.

	USC United States Citizen - Holds a US Passport or US birth certificate	LPR Legal Permanent Resident - Holds a Green Card	Visa Holder Holds a valid visa	Undocumented Holds no documents or has pending application with USCIS
Federal Aid	Yes	Yes	No	No
State Aid	Yes	Yes	No	No
In-State Tuition (See AB540 section)	Yes, if you meet CA residency requirement or qualify for AB540	Yes, if you meet CA residency requirement or qualify for AB540	Depends on your visa; not eligible for AB540	Yes, if eligible for AB540
Government Loans	Yes	Yes	No	No
Private Loans	Yes	Yes	Yes, but need resident co-signer	Yes, but need resident co-signer
Government Grants	Yes	Yes	No	No
Institutional Aid	Yes	Yes	Depends on visa you hold, and if school you attend is public or private	No, unless school you attend is private
Work-Study	Yes	Yes	No	No
Scholarships	Depends on eligibility requirements	Depends on eligibility requirements	Depends on eligibility requirements	Depends on eligibility requirements
Fellowships (graduate school)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4. IF MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED, CAN HE/SHE STILL QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL AID?

Public colleges/universities do not provide financial aid to undocumented students. Private schools, however, may provide scholarships that can cover part or all of the cost of the student's college education. A few undocumented students have been able to get full rides at great institutions such as Santa Clara University, Occidental College, Pitzer College, Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia and Brown.

Other sources that can help fund your child's education are matched savings programs called Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). IDAs allow individuals with jobs to get \$2 for every \$1 they save. So, if your child saves \$2,000, then he/she gets a total of \$6,000! See Opportunity Fund's IDA program as example: <http://www.opportunityfund.org/ida>

5. IF MY CHILD IS UNDOCUMENTED, IS HE/SHE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE LOANS?

No. Undocumented students do not qualify for government loans or any federal/state financial aid. However, there are various private scholarships and private loans available that can help pay for your child's education.

6. I AM UNDOCUMENTED, BUT MY CHILD IS A US CITIZEN. WILL MY STATUS AFFECT MY SON/DAUGHTER WHEN HE/SHE IS APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID?

No. A student who is a US citizen and applying for financial aid will qualify for federal and state financial aid. Their parents' legal status does not matter.

7. MY CHILD NEEDS TO WORK WHILE HE/SHE'S IN SCHOOL. IS HE/SHE ABLE TO WORK DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR? HOW ABOUT WHILE HE/SHE'S IN COLLEGE?

Colleges and universities offer on-campus jobs for students. Unfortunately, undocumented students do not qualify for these jobs because they require a legal work permit.

However, there are other opportunities such as research internships and/or leadership positions on campus which will allow undocumented students to gain job experience and learn important skills. Undocumented students will need to take the initiative to ask professors or the school organization for which they want to work if they can be paid with a stipend or a similar form of payment.

8. WHAT'S AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is a temporary, work-related learning experience that allows students do hands-on work in a particular field. Internships are important because they help students develop different skills and allow them to gain more experience in their career of choice. Internships can be paid or non-paid.

CHAPTER 4 – SCHOLARSHIPS

- # ARE UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?
- # MY CHILD DOES NOT HAVE VERY GOOD GRADES. CAN HE/SHE STILL APPLY TO SCHOLARSHIPS?
- # I AM WORRIED THAT MY SON/DAUGHTER WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT HIS/HER LEGAL STATUS WHEN APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS. WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DO STUDENTS HAVE TO PROVIDE?
- # MY FAMILY'S FINANCIAL SITUATION IS NOT VERY GOOD. IS THAT IMPORTANT? HOW WILL IT AFFECT MY CHILD WHEN HE/SHE IS APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?

CHAPTER 4 – SCHOLARSHIPS

1. ARE UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?

Yes, although each scholarship has its own eligibility rules. Scholarships are the most common way that undocumented students pay for college. There are a number of scholarships that do not require a social security number. There are various online sources that provide information about scholarships available for undocumented students, such as E4FC's List of Scholarships that Don't Require Social Security Numbers: <http://e4fc.org/studentresources/scholarshiplists.html>

2. MY CHILD DOES NOT HAVE VERY GOOD GRADES. CAN HE/SHE STILL APPLY TO SCHOLARSHIPS?

Grades matter a lot, especially for undocumented students, and you should encourage your child to do well in school. In addition to grades, some scholarships also pay great attention to the student's community involvement (community service) and leadership positions. Scholarships also look at the obstacles and challenges student have faced, so it is important that undocumented students are not afraid to talk about their immigration stories. Scholarships also tend to specify minimum grade point averages for their applicants. For example, some scholarships target students who are in the 3.0 range.

Scholarships have different criteria and focus. For example, some scholarships target certain academic interests, such as medicine. If your child has a lot of experience volunteering or working for a clinic or hospital, for example, then he/she may be eligible for those scholarships.

3. I AM WORRIED THAT MY SON/ DAUGHTER WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT HIS/HER

LEGAL STATUS WHEN APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS. WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DO STUDENTS HAVE TO PROVIDE?

Generally, scholarships available for undocumented students will not request information about students' legal status. They will ask basic information such as name, home address, phone number, and, sometimes, the place of birth.

The information provided to scholarships is also confidential and will not be provided to any immigration agency.

Students will often also be asked to write personal statements in which, depending on the prompt, they can write about their personal stories.

Depending on the organization or individual giving the scholarships, students may choose to write about their immigration stories or experience as an undocumented student.

4. MY FAMILY'S FINANCIAL SITUATION IS NOT VERY GOOD. IS THAT IMPORTANT? HOW WILL IT AFFECT MY CHILD WHEN HE/SHE IS APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?

Some scholarships are merit-based scholarships, which means they are awarded to students based on academic excellence and/or community involvement. Other scholarships focus on awarding money to students from low-income families and will therefore ask for the family's income situation. A low economic standing is not a reason for rejection among scholarships. In fact, most scholarships aim to help students with fewer resources so it is important to tell the truth about the family's financial situation. Usually, scholarships request proof of financial situation, which means providing a letter from your employer or the previous year's income tax returns or filling out the CSS/Financial Profile to assess your family's financial need and determine eligibility for non-government financial aid.

CHAPTER 5 – LIFE DURING COLLEGE

- # WHAT IS A MAJOR?
- # WILL MY SON/DAUGHTER BE OFFERED ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC HELP IF HE/SHE NEEDS IT?
- # IN MY COUNTRY, IT IS NOT CUSTOMARY FOR STUDENTS TO LIVE ON CAMPUS. SHOULD I LET MY CHILD LIVE ON CAMPUS? HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?
- # WHAT IS A MEAL PLAN?
- # IS THE COLLEGE CAMPUS SAFE?
- # WHAT KIND OF TRANSPORTATION DO COLLEGES PROVIDE?

CHAPTER 5 – LIFE DURING COLLEGE

1. WHAT IS A MAJOR?

A major is the area of academic focus that students choose when they attend college, such as Math, Spanish, Economics, Political Science, etc. At some schools, a student can decide to “double-major,” which means students can choose more than one field of study. If a student decides to double major, he/she can choose, for example, Economics and Political Science. If your child does not know or is unsure as to what career or major he/she would like to pursue, then he/she can be “undeclared” and can later decide what to major in. In fact, a great number of students enter college as undeclared and after taking a few classes they decide on their major.

2. WILL MY SON/DAUGHTER BE OFFERED ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC HELP IF HE/SHE NEEDS IT?

Yes. Schools provide tutoring for commonly-taught subjects, such as math and English, which is often free to students. Some schools also have writing centers that focus on helping students with papers. Professors also provide office hours when students can meet individually with professors and ask questions about a class assignment.

Finally, students are also assigned an advisor at the beginning of their freshmen year. This advisor helps students choose their classes and makes sure the student has completed everything for graduation.

3. IN MY COUNTRY, IT IS NOT CUSTOMARY FOR STUDENTS TO LIVE ON CAMPUS. SHOULD I LET MY CHILD LIVE ON CAMPUS? HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

Campus life is very safe. Some schools require students to live on campus for the first year of college because freshman year tends to be the most difficult year. By living on campus, students are able to dedicate more time to their studies by saving the time they would have spent commuting. Campus life also exposes students to the different opportunities their school provides such as clubs, athletics, and leadership roles. Living on the college campus also enables students to become more responsible since they have to make their own decisions and learn how to take care of themselves. Finally, they also get to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds, which enable students to grow as individuals.

Students who decide to live on-campus usually stay in dormitories, which are supervised by an adult or older student. Students living in the dorms are subjected to various rules they must follow, such as no alcohol, drugs, etc. During the first year of college and sometimes beyond students often share a room with one or more roommates.

Students may also decide to live at home and commute to school.

4. WHAT IS A MEAL PLAN?

At the beginning of every school year, students living on-campus decide whether to pay for a meal plan. If the student chooses to purchase a meal plan, then that money will be allocated solely for the student’s food expenses on campus. For example, if a student decides to purchase a meal plan that costs \$1,200 a quarter, then the student has \$1,200 to spend on food in the cafes and dining halls on-campus. Every school has different meal plan choices, which may also include an “all-inclusive” option that allows a student unlimited access to the cafeterias.

5. IS THE COLLEGE CAMPUS SAFE?

Yes. Most schools give a very high level of attention to campus security. For example, it is common, particularly at night, to see security guards in different parts of the campus making sure everything is safe. Students are also provided with a number they can call in case of emergency and may also have a number to call if they need someone to escort them back to their dorm late at night. There are also security poles in different parts of the campus that have a button that students can press in case of emergency and receive help. Schools also have a health center and a group of medical assistants in case of medical emergencies.

6. WHAT KIND OF TRANSPORTATION DO COLLEGES PROVIDE?

Some schools have very large campuses and provide their own transportation within campus, free to students. Students can also purchase a parking permit if they decide to take their cars to campus. Commuter students often purchase a parking permit or use public transportation to go to school.

CHAPTER 6 – LIFE, EXPECTATIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES AFTER COLLEGE

I'M WORRIED THAT MY CHILD WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WORK AFTER HE/
SHE GRADUATES FROM COLLEGE. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL MY CHILD
HAVE AFTER COLLEGE?

CHAPTER 6 – LIFE, EXPECTATIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES AFTER COLLEGE

1. I'M WORRIED THAT MY CHILD WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WORK AFTER HE/ SHE GRADUATES FROM COLLEGE. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL MY CHILD HAVE AFTER COLLEGE?

If the DREAM Act passes, your child's college degree will allow him/her to meet the eligibility requirements of the act and gain access to the same employment opportunities that US citizens enjoy. Until passage of the DREAM Act (or other federal immigration reform), your worries are legitimate; your child will likely face challenges finding legal work opportunities, even if he/she attends and graduates from college.

However, graduating from college will give your child increased opportunities to gain professional experience. For example, he/she may be able to find meaningful internships at non-profits and other small organizations. Although these internships may not be paid, they will allow your child to gain more experience in the field of their choice. Internships will also allow your child to expand his/her network.

A college degree may also help your child find job opportunities outside the United States. If your child isn't able to live in the US, he/she can use his/her college degree to find a job elsewhere.

Graduating from college will also give your child the possibility to pursue future graduate studies in law, medicine, business, and other professions. A college degree is a prerequisite for any graduate program here in the US or elsewhere.

Finally, a college education will give your child more opportunities to engage actively and productively in his/her community. For example, after graduation many undocumented students return to their communities and educate people about immigration issues or participate in programs to help improve their neighborhoods.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KAREN HERNANDEZ works as a Publications Intern for Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC). She was born in Guatemala and came to the United States when she was eleven years old. Because of the many struggles she experienced due to poverty in her home country, Karen has always been interested in raising awareness about different social issues. She recently graduated from Santa Clara University with a Bachelors of Science in Economics. At Santa Clara she served as the Advocacy Program Coordinator at the Multicultural Center, where she programmed different events to educate students about issues such as racism, poverty, immigration, and genocide. She also helped professors in the Sociology and Economics departments with their research. Karen co-founded a program called Leaders of Tomorrow, which mentors undocumented high school students in East Palo Alto. In the near future she plans to pursue a degree in Public Policy & Management. Just as she was given the opportunity to obtain an education, Karen hopes to give back to her community in as many ways as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guide would not have been possible without the collaboration of the many parents from East Palo Alto (CA) who took the time to share their concerns and questions about their children going to college. Thank you, also, to the students of Leaders of Tomorrow (LOT) and their families. Finally, thank you to Jennifer Pence (Academic Springboard), Maddy Russell-Shapiro, and Jane Slater (Sequoia High School) for their thoughtful advice and expertise in the final editing of this guide.

ABOUT US

EDUCATORS FOR FAIR CONSIDERATION (E4FC)

E4FC's mission is to help immigrant students realize the American dream of college and citizenship. Specifically, we provide direct support and advocate for low-income immigrant students who have grown up in the United States but face challenges due to financial need and immigration status. We offer a uniquely tailored suite of programs and services to address the financial, legal, political, professional, and socio-emotional needs of low-income immigrant students who do not yet have permanent residency or citizenship in the United States.

For more information about Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC), please visit www.e4fc.org.