



Frequently Asked Questions About the College Application Process for Undocumented Youth

Q: Can a student without immigration status, undocumented, enroll in college?

A: In New York State, students without immigration status, undocumented, can legally enroll in public colleges and universities (CUNY and SUNY). Private colleges set their own policies, so each one is different. A call to the admissions office can determine whether students without immigration status are eligible. Keep in mind that there are serious and real risks for students and families that decide to go to school upstate because of federal law that allows for immigration check points within 100 miles of either border.

Q: Are students without immigration status in-state, out-of-state or international students, for the purposes of college tuition?

A: Students without immigration status, undocumented students, who reside in New York State and either graduated from high school or took the GED in NY are eligible to pay in-state tuition at public colleges in New York State. See "In-State Tuition For Undocumented Students" for information regarding the application process (below).

Q: What should a student without a social security number write in the SSN box?

A: A student without a social security number should leave the SSN box BLANK, write none or write N/A. A student should never lie about their social security number. No student is required to submit a social security number. Students can also leave the SSN box blank on the SAT. While students can attend college without a social security number, degrees the require licensing work can require a social security number, so students should keep this in mind when choosing degree and career paths.

Q: What should a student without immigration status write in the immigration status section? Won't writing that they do not have an immigration status get them in trouble with immigration?

A: Students without immigration status should never lie and say that they are U.S. citizens or Legal Permanent Residents (green card holders). They should write "none" or "not qualified". Under federal law, schools cannot disclose this information to immigration. Schools only disclose information regarding students with international student visas.

Q: What is the difference between a student without immigration status and an international student?

A: An undocumented student without immigration status does not have a valid visa or green card. An international student comes to the United States with a student visa (or another visa status, specifically to attend school. It is very unlikely that undocumented students can apply for a student visa if they have lived in the US. Some have been able to do this, but it requires a significant amount of legal work so students should consult with attorneys.

Q: Are students without immigration status eligible for state or federal financial aid?

A: Currently, students without immigration status are not eligible for state or federal financial aid, including the Tuition Assistance Program and Pell Grants. They can file a FAFSA, which will be returned to them marked "ineligible". However, it will include an "expected family contribution", which may be needed to apply for private scholarships. They should only fill out the contact information and check the corresponding boxes, namely "ineligible non-citizen" and not continue because it will not be reviewed. FAFSA applications for students without immigration status should only be mailed as hard copies.

Q: What options for financial assistance do students without immigration status have?

A: Students without immigration status may be eligible for certain private scholarships. A partial list can be found at nysylc.org. Other scholarship organizations can be called to determine eligibility requirements. Additionally, there are tuition pay plans that allow students to pay in installments, instead of all at once. Students can get loans by having family members or people they know who do have immigration status act as co-signers. Some students have written letters to foundations, local business leaders, etc. to receive financial assistance.

Q: Where can I find more information or refer a student for assistance?

A: The New York State Youth Leadership Council is happy to assist undocumented or immigrant students with the college application process. We are also happy to assist educators and counselors who have questions about how best to help their students. Please contact us at info@nysylc.org. Also, the CUNY Citizenship Now Project assists anyone in New York City with immigration law related questions. Visit their website at <http://web.cuny.edu/about/citizenship.html>.

IMPORTANT: "In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students Eligibility Requirements and Application Process"

In 2002 New York passed a law that allows undocumented immigrants to apply for in-state tuition if they meet the following criteria:

1) Attended a New York State High School for two years and graduated from a New York State High School and applied for admission to CUNY or SUNY.

OR

2) Attended a New York State Program for General Equivalency Diploma (GED) exam preparation, received a GED issued within New York State, and applied for admission to CUNY or SUNY

OR

3) Were enrolled in CUNY in the Fall 2001 semester or quarter and were authorized by CUNY to pay tuition at the resident rate. Thus, a student who attended CUNY in the Fall 2001 semester and paid the resident rate does not have to satisfy either of the conditions above.

To be eligible for in-state tuition, in addition to meeting the above requirements, you must file a notarized form (affidavit) stating that you have either filed an application to legalize your immigration status or will file such an application as soon as you are eligible to do so.

And:

To apply for in- state tuition, request a "City University Residency Form" at the registration office of your college. You must provide the "City University Residency Form" and the necessary documentation proving New York State residency for 12 months prior to the first day of classes for the semester.