

Tips for Funding & Serving Undocumented Students

INFORMATION FOR FUNDERS

- Do not require students to state that they are undocumented anywhere on the application.
 - The information provided to foundations is not protected in the same way that information provided to educational institutions is and may be subpoenaed by the USCIS.
 - You may ask students for this information verbally.
 - To avoid problems, you may want to advertise funding as financial support for low-income immigrant students.
- Inform undocumented students that you offer funding for college as early as possible.
 - Many undocumented students are told early on that they cannot go to college and information to the contrary is vital.
- Offer funds to all undocumented students, not just those who are going to the most competitive schools because this may leave out undocumented students who are often not admitted to these schools due to their inability to pay.
- Just because you have not provided funding to undocumented students in the past does not mean you cannot provide them with funding.
- The federal government does not require you to get a social security number or proof of residency in order to provide funding to students.
 - The 990 Form only requires the names and addresses of students.
- There is no need to be afraid to provide funding for undocumented students. So far, we have not heard of any groups that have been penalized in any way for providing funding to undocumented students.

TIMING OF AWARDS

- Donors should try to adopt timelines to meet undocumented students' needs.
- When undocumented students apply to private schools, they are often considered “international” students and may be rejected due to their inability to pay.
 - Therefore, undocumented students need information about receipt of scholarship awards before admissions letters are received.

TIPS FOR ADVOCATES

Scholarships

- If funders are filtering scholarship awards through the college, make sure that it does not become state money once it gets to the college.

Mentoring Students

- If you are concerned that students may be afraid to reveal their undocumented status, when you are speaking to students, say something like:
 - “You may feel like you are experiencing challenges that others are not like finding money to pay for college or being an undocumented student. If so, please feel free to speak to me privately.”
- Help your students weigh their options for funding their education.
- Help your students develop a 4-year plan for funding their education so that they are able to determine what is most doable.
- No one can take away your education although employment may be a challenge
- Tell students how much they contribute to the institution and society

Talking to Adversaries

- Focus on how qualified students are, rather than their undocumented status; focus on the obstacles that have overcome.
- Some schools have don't ask, don't tell policies but this makes it difficult to identify students and advocates.

NOTE: *Much of the information provided here comes from the following organization:*
Educators for Fair Consideration (www.e4fc.org)

- *This organization is based in northern California and has a fund that does not require citizenship.*
- *They are currently working with a legal team to determine if organizations are at risk by providing resources to undocumented students and are interested in answering any questions you may have.*
- *Interested in screening their documentary on undocumented students in different places, but not yet releasing video.*