



**¡AL COLEGIO
SI SE PUEDE!:**
Undocumented Student Guide



ABOUT LA UNION DEL PUEBLO ENTERO

Founded by labor rights activists César Chávez & Dolores Huerta, LUPE builds pueblo power by developing community leaders through membership. From fighting deportations, to providing social services and English classes, to organizing for streetlights and drainage, LUPE responds to the needs of the community, and takes action that creates a chance for a better life. LUPE envisions justice and belonging for all - regardless of race, age, gender, and immigration status - so that the pueblo can thrive, live with dignity, and achieve liberation.

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<https://lupenet.org/>

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PREFACE

When I was seven years old, my family immigrated from Mexico to the United States. I spent 9 years without an immigration status. At 16, I was fortunate to qualify for DACA. Shortly after my college application process began. Early on in the process I realized I was not like most of my classmates. I remember the exact moment I had this realization. My English class was in a computer lab in which a counselor was guiding us through our first college application. Question by question. Step by step. The first couple of questions were easy then we got to THE question; Are you a U.S. citizen? I knew I wasn't but suddenly I panicked and answered "yes". I don't know why exactly. Perhaps I was scared my college privileges would be revoked if I had answered "no". Regardless, that split second decision led me to a bumpier road towards college. From then on I was filled with anxiety and questions like do I qualify for financial aid? What is an affidavit? Do my parents file taxes? The list goes on. My college application process wasn't easy. I made a lot of mistakes and learned more lessons. Nevertheless, I eventually figured everything out on my own time. At LUPE, I am fortunate to utilize these lived experiences to advise undocumented students through their college application process. LUPE's goal with this guide is to facilitate this journey for you in hopes you make little to no mistakes.

As an undocumented student you face unique challenges and uncertainties when it comes to pursuing higher education. Despite these obstacles, it is important to remember that you have the right to access higher education regardless of your immigration status. As we go through this journey together, please keep in mind how far you have come. How far your family has come. You are so resilient and have endless potential. If a small setback should arise throughout this process, do not let it keep you from reaching your goal of attending college. We'll find the solution together. We came to this country to thrive and that is what we're going to do. ***¡Si Se Puede!***

With love, your friend at LUPE

P.S. Give us a call if you need assistance!
(956)787-2233

CHAPTER 1: ¿SI SE PUEDE!



“CAN I GO TO COLLEGE?”

Some of you may have asked yourself this question at some point in your life. Others may already know the answer. Rest assured that **YES, YOU CAN** attend college. In the United States, every state has its own laws regarding undocumented students' ability to attend college. In Texas, everyone has the right to access higher education regardless of immigration status.

THE TEXAS DREAM ACT

In the early 2000s, there was a growth in organizing and advocacy efforts done by undocumented students, known as Dreamers. Dreamers played an important role in raising awareness of the challenges they faced in accessing higher education because of their immigration status. These actions contributed to the development of legislation changes such as the **Texas DREAM Act**.

Since 2001, certain undocumented students have the right to qualify as Texas residents for tuition purposes. This right was granted by the Texas House Bill 1403 and later expanded by the Texas Senate Bill 1528 in 2005. Qualifying as a Texas resident means you will pay in-state tuition at public institutions in Texas & can apply for TASFA.

IF THIS INSPIRES YOU TO TAKE ACTION & CREATE CHANGE, MAKE SURE TO VISIT CHAPTER 7!

FOR MORE INFO ON TASFA GO TO CHAPTER 3!

TO QUALIFY AS A TEXAS RESIDENT, YOU MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING:

- 1** Graduate from a public or private high school, or receive a GED, in Texas;

- 2** Live in Texas for at least the 3 years leading up to high school graduation or receiving a GED;

- 3** Live in Texas for the 12 months leading up to the semester you are enrolling in college; and

- 4** Provide the college or university a notarized affidavit of intent (Appendix A) stating that you will file an application to become a U.S. permanent resident as soon as you are eligible to do so.

Immigrant students who do not meet the requirements above but who have filed an I-30 (family petition) or I-40 (work petition) with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and have received a Notice of Action as a response from the USCIS, are also eligible to receive in-state tuition if they have been here for at least 12 months.

People holding work visas (H-1B) and their dependents (H-4) can now also receive in-state tuition at state universities. The same is true for applicants of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) applicants, among others.

If you do not qualify for any of the above, you can still attend college. However, you will most likely pay out of state tuition. Additionally, you do not qualify for state financial aid making it difficult to pay for school.

REACH OUT TO US AT LUPE IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT QUALIFYING!

Okay, so you **CAN** go to college...but where should you go? The following information can help you make that decision. There are different types of schools and degrees available to you. Please take them into consideration when making your decision.

TWO-YEAR & FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Higher education institutions can be categorized into several types based on their academic programs, degrees offered, and institutional focus. Two-year institutions are known as community colleges. Colleges primarily offer associate degrees and certifications. Associate degrees can be non-transfer, meaning they provide the necessary skills for specific jobs, or they can be transfer degrees, which allows you to transfer credits to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor's degree. Four-year institutions, commonly referred to as universities, offer undergraduate programs that generally last four years of full-time study.

VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Vocational and technical (Vo-Tech) schools are privately funded institutions. Vo-Tech schools offer licenses and certificates which can be completed in 6 months to 2 years. It is very important to do your research before applying to a vocational or technical school. Because these institutions are privately funded, some of them double the tuition or don't offer financial aid for undocumented students. If you are interested in a Vo-Tech school, I recommend calling the school to ask what resources they offer to undocumented students, if any.

VISIT CHAPTER 3 FOR MORE INFO ON CREDIT, FULL-TIME STUDY, & TUITION!

PUBLIC & PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Public and private higher education institutions differ in their ownership, funding sources, governance, and overall mission. Public institutions are owned and funded by the government, typically at the state level. They receive a significant amount of their budget from state appropriations and taxpayer funds, resulting in lower tuition rates for in-state students. Private institutions are not owned or operated by the government. Instead, they are funded through fees, endowments, donations, and sometimes religious affiliations. Their tuition tends to be higher than public institutions. You can attend both public and private; however, you have to see what is more convenient for you.

DEGREE TYPES

We've talked about the different types of institutions and the type of degrees they offer. Now let's dig a little deeper into the different types of degrees you can earn.

DEGREE	DESCRIPTION
CERTIFICATION/LICENSE	A program indicating competency in a specific skill or field obtained through courses, exams, or practical assessments. It usually takes months to a couple of years to complete.
ASSOCIATE DEGREE	An undergraduate degree typically obtained from a community or technical college that usually takes 2 years to obtain. An associate degree provides knowledge in a particular area of study that prepares you to enter the workforce upon graduation. It can also serve as a foundation for a bachelor's program.
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	A four-year undergraduate degree earned from a college or university. It offers a comprehensive understanding of your chosen field of study. With a bachelor's degree, you can be well-prepared for many entry-level careers in your chosen field. It is often considered a minimum requirement for many professional roles.
MASTER'S DEGREE	An advanced degree that follows a Bachelor's program and often takes 1-2 years to complete. Most master's programs require a minimum of 30 credits. It offers specialized knowledge in a specific area and can lead to career advancement or specialization within a field.
DOCTORATE DEGREE	A doctorate is the highest level of academic degree you can achieve, typically taking several years to complete beyond a bachelor's or master's degree. With a doctorate you may become an expert in your area of study and pursue careers in academia or advanced professional roles.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A HIGHER EDUCATION FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS: HIGHLIGHTING BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

We all know that college is a powerful tool that can help transform lives and empower individuals. Your journey may not be easy, it rarely is for any college student let alone an undocumented student. You will encounter unique challenges and situations. For this reason a testimonio from an undocumented professional on their journey towards, during, and after college is included below. In hopes that their words help you realize your endless potential, if you haven't already. You can overcome anything & come back stronger than ever, just like the undocu professional below.

ESPERANZA'S TESTIMONIO

REALIZATION OF STATUS

There is always a defining moment for every undocumented student where it dawns on them how different their reality is from that of their peers. For me it happened as a freshman in high school; I was invited to attend a college tour to Texas A&M, which was on the other side of the Falfurrias checkpoint. I remember how excited I was to have been invited, but I also remember the fear in my mothers eyes as I explained the news to

her. My mother immediately called the program and got informed that due to my immigration status, my invitation had been rescinded and I would not be able to attend. During this moment, in the midst of the disappointment and despair I felt, I realized how much weight my immigration status carried and the power it had in defining my future.

JOURNEY TO COLLEGE

The following high school years passed by fairly quickly. Despite that defining moment, I've always had it present that I wanted to get a college education. During the last year of high school, while my peers were applying to universities all over the nation and abroad, I became even more desperate to figure out a way to attend university, any university for that matter. My parents, Mexican immigrants, had done everything in their power to guide me up until this point. I knew that this was a journey

I had to start alone, and whilst it was hard to navigate a system I knew nothing about, I was able to find people along the way that made it a little less scary.

Despite living in a border city, college staff seemed poorly prepared to handle questions and situations from the undocumented student community. I encountered so much misinformation from people that were supposed to guide you through college admissions, financial aid

applications, and standardized tests. I attended workshops at my local college to fill out the ApplyTexas application and they often seemed unsure of how to proceed when I explained my situation. I remember almost making the mistake of applying as an international student, thinking this was the only way. Luckily, my high school counselor caught on to this quickly, and was able to correct my path and shine some light on what the admissions process could look like for an undocumented student like me.

Similarly, the difficulties of the TASFA application were a mystery, and were intimidating for both my parents and me. Back in 2015, the process for filling out the TASFA was more complex and

COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

As an immigrant and first-generation, low-income (FGLI) student, the first year of university is exciting yet terrifying. There's still so many more bumps down the road that you don't really anticipate or know to prepare for and you're filled with questions like "Will financial aid cover all my tuition? How will I pay for books? Are these the right courses I should take in my first semester? How will I commute to campus? How will I do my homework without a laptop?" All this anxiety is understandable, but you have to remind yourself that if you've gotten this far already, there's nothing stopping you.

Seemingly simple tasks like understanding your first tuition bill, and creating your class schedule are complicated and confusing. The whole financial aid process takes a while to reflect on your bill, but if you've submitted every paper and material required from you, rest-assured that TASFA will most likely cover most of your tuition and you might even receive some money to cover other expenses, like access codes. At least this was my experience and I was able to afford my first laptop due to TASFA. In addition, signing up for classes is also something really intense. Reading your degree plan and planning out what classes need to be taken the first two semesters is overwhelming when you are not familiar with the process. My recommendation

tedious, and had to be done on paper- leaving no room for mistakes. Not only did I have to fill out the application, which in itself was stressful, but I also had to get a residency affidavit notarized and my parents had to get their income notarized. For the undocumented community, doing anything that might expose them and potentially reveal their status (e.g. going to the hospital or doctor, getting documents notarized, traffic tickets) is often avoided, so my parents' sole willingness to get their income notarized despite the potential repercussions, was a pure act of love. Ultimately, it was the support of my parents and people close to me that knew about my situation that were able to help me get into college.

would be to find a faculty member from your department early on that can guide you through the courses you need to take. Faculty members are great for guidance and can often refer you to resources that your general counselors cannot!

Once you start though, you start getting the hang of things. You start immersing yourself in your department, and start networking with people with similar interests as you. One of the smartest things you can do during this time as an undocumented student is network with your department and peers. Find a professor that you connect with and that can become your mentor. Join a research lab or an organization that your mentor is involved in. As I mentioned before, faculty from your department often push you and offer you resources and opportunities that otherwise you wouldn't know about. This was how I received numerous scholarships later in my career and how I got to travel to conferences to present my research work- all while undocumented.

During my time in university, I found my peers applying for internships at big companies, something that I couldn't do due to my status. I took this as an opportunity to look at smaller businesses and organizations that could use some help in my area of expertise. I started

interning for non-profit organizations that aligned with my interests and values, and that I knew I could make a difference. For example, I interned with Rise First, an online platform that empowers first-generation, low-income (FGLI) students and professionals, as a web developer. In addition, I joined several organizations related to my career that provided me with volunteering opportunities locally.

JOURNEY AFTER COLLEGE: FINDING JOBS AS AN UNDOCUMENTED PROFESSIONAL

Once I neared the finish line for my bachelors in Computer Science, I had a number of projects and internships I had acquired, but still didn't have a job lined up. Of course, the main obstacle was my status; I knew I couldn't pursue the jobs my fellow peers were. I remember feeling very hopeless and frustrated during this time period as I continued to work as a cashier at a Mexican food restaurant. I spent a year feeling depressed, lost, and I even questioned why I went to university knowing I couldn't work in my field.

One day, I realized that if I was able to get a bachelors, I could get a masters degree while I waited for my immigration status to resolve. This is where I reached out to my mentor, Dr. Ayati and the computer science department chair at UTRGV, Dr. Tomai, to help me achieve my goal of getting a masters degree in computer science.

During my bachelors, I fell in love with data science as I had worked very closely with my mentor for my capstone. This helped me to get admitted to the Masters program as I

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the main reason I've decided to write about my journey through college and share my story as an undocu-professional is to validate and provide comfort to other undocumented people. Creating your own path is hard, especially when you don't have access to the same resources as your US citizen peers, but I assure you that the skills and knowledge you acquire from doing it are invaluable. My recommendation for anyone

Overall, even though there's a lot of hardships and roadblocks, there are also so many rewarding experiences. Your time in college is the time that you get to meet different people from all walks of life; You create new friendships, and you'll network with people from your own career path. You'll discover new passions and dislikes, and truly get to explore who you are and what you want out of life. Take the most advantage of it.

had excellent recommendations from various professors. In addition, Dr. Tomai helped me look for scholarships, assistantships, and other forms of financial aid to get me to afford the program. Although this wasn't an easy task, I was later awarded a fellowship that paid for more than half my tuition during my first year, and received a 10k scholarship from Motorola for my second year.

Since then, I have graduated and I still haven't been able to fully resolve my immigration status, but I feel a lot less hopelessness. I've used my degree and career experiences to land freelance jobs, and contract work. I've worked as a paid freelance web developer for a non-profit organization outside of the valley and I am currently working as a contract IT specialist at another non-profit. My recommendation is to get your ITIN and look for contract work in small businesses and organizations locally, especially those that you feel are more welcoming to immigrants.

in a similar situation is to find your support system and confide in them about your status, it will make the road ahead easier and a lot less lonely. Trust that you'll be able to achieve all the things you propose to yourself, even if it's not clear how and it seems impossible; Once you start the journey, you'll find the right people and resources meant for you.



Now that you have gotten a glimpse into the possibilities college has to offer, let's talk about the actual college application process. At first glance, this process will look similar to that of your classmates'. However, there is an extra layer of awareness you need to have throughout it. In this chapter, we will go over a sample ApplyTexas application with emphasis on citizenship & Texas residency questions, what you should consider when choosing a major, and your personal statement. Additionally, we've included a couple of helpful tables. Let's begin with the most important factor in this journey, your college application.

SAMPLE APPLYTEXAS APPLICATION: EMPHASIS ON CITIZENSHIP & TEXAS RESIDENCY QUESTIONS

Any sort of application can be a bit overwhelming. This one especially comes with a bit of anxiety and confusion. However, taking it step by step helps simplify it. So that is exactly what we're going to do. We're mainly focusing on the citizenship and Texas residency questions of the application.

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS LIVING IN THE RGV CANNOT LEGALLY PASS THE FALFURRIAS CHECKPOINT. YOU CAN APPLY TO SCHOOLS PAST THE CHECKPOINT AND HAVE THE LEGAL RIGHT TO ATTEND THOSE SCHOOLS, BUT THE FALFURRIAS CHECKPOINT IS A LEGAL PHYSICAL BARRIER.

So what is ApplyTexas? ApplyTexas is the online platform you will use to send out your college admissions applications to schools in Texas. You can also use ApplyTexas to apply for scholarships. If you would like to apply to universities outside of Texas, you will need to use the CommonApplication online platform.

ApplyTexas will save your changes so feel free to reach out to your high school counselor if at any point you need assistance with the application.

THANKS TO THE FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) SCHOOL PERSONNEL CANNOT DISCLOSE PERSONAL STUDENT INFORMATION (INCLUDING IMMIGRATION STATUS). FOR THIS REASON, YOU SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO EXPRESS YOUR DESIRE TO ATTEND COLLEGE. REMEMBER TO ASK FOR HELP AND ADVICE FROM YOUR HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR DURING THIS PROCESS.

LET'S GET STARTED!

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

When creating an ApplyTexas account, like with anything concerning college, it is important to use your personal email. If you do not have one, create one first.

Once you have created your account you will be taken to a welcome page. In this page you have the option to visit My Texas Future in which you can explore career options and programs. Right below this option you will get a list of steps you will need to complete throughout your application.

STEP 1: FIND THE RIGHT APPLICATION

In this step you will go through high school status, course history, and U.S. citizenship questions. **Let's focus on the U.S. citizenship questions.**

- All questions regarding citizenship and visa status should be answered honestly. Rest assured, the information shared will remain with the college admissions office of the colleges you apply to.
- For most of you the correct answer is "None of the above apply to me". If you have any doubts, consult with your guardians before submitting the application.
- Select "Yes" if all of these circumstances apply to you.

Are you a U.S. Citizen? *

YES NO

Which of these apply to you? *

I hold permanent resident status (green card)

I have an application for permanent residence pending

I hold an eligible visa (list of eligible visas)

None of the above apply to me

Do all of these circumstances apply to you? I graduated or will graduate from a Texas high school or received my GED certificate in Texas. I resided in Texas for three years leading up to graduation from high school or receiving my GED certificate. I have resided or will have resided in Texas for the 12 months prior to the census date of the semester in which I will enroll in a college or university. *

YES NO

STEP 2: CORE QUESTIONS

Step 2 covers information about you, your household, your education and testing, and your activities and achievements. Again, we will focus on the citizenship and residency questions.

- This answer should be the same as your country of birth. Every question should be answered honestly throughout the application.
- The answer to this question is probably "No". If you have any doubts, talk to your guardians to be sure.

Citizenship information

Are you a U.S. citizen? *

YES NO

Of what country are you a citizen?

--

Are you currently residing in the U.S.? *

YES NO

Do you hold Permanent Residence status (valid I-551) for the U.S.? *

YES NO

STEP 2: CORE QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

- This can remain blank if it does not apply to you.
- Select "Yes" if this applies to you.

If you are not a U.S. citizen or U.S. permanent resident, are you a foreign national here with a visa that makes you eligible to domicile for Texas residency purposes (see list of eligible visas) or are you a Refugee, Asylee, Parolee or here under Temporary Protective Status? ⓘ

--

If you are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, do you have an application for permanent residence (form I-485) pending with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)? ⓘ

YES NO

If you are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident or have no application pending with the USCIS, did you live or will you have lived in Texas for 36 consecutive months leading up to high school graduation or completion of the GED? ⓘ

YES NO

- This is where you can establish Texas residency, meaning you qualify for in-state tuition.
- Select "Yes" to both of these questions if the circumstances apply to you.

Texas residency

Household - Step 3 of 5

On this page, enter information about where you live. This information helps schools determine if you are a Texas resident. Schools use residency status to determine in and out-of-state tuition and evaluate applications.

Of what state are you a resident? *

Texas

Did you live or will you have lived in Texas for 36 consecutive months leading up to high school graduation or completion of the GED? ⓘ

YES NO

When you begin the semester for which you are applying, will you have lived in Texas for the previous 12 months? *

YES NO

- **Example:** If you have lived in Texas for 3 full years and 4 months, you would put 3 years on this question and 4 months on this one.
- Your main purpose of living in Texas is to establish and maintain a home. Texas is your home, after all.

If you currently live in Texas, how many years have you been living here? *

3

If you currently live in Texas, how many months (not including the years you entered above) have you been living here? *

4

If you currently live in Texas, what is your main purpose for being in the state? ⓘ

Establish/Maintain a home

- Answer these questions honestly.

Do you hold the title to residential real property in Texas? *

YES NO

Do you have ownership interest and customarily manage a business in Texas without the intention of liquidation in the foreseeable future? *

YES NO

Have you been gainfully employed in Texas for the past 12 months? *

YES NO

Have you received primary support from a social services agency for the past 12 months? *

YES NO

Are you married to a person who either: owns property in Texas, owns a business in Texas, is gainfully employed in Texas, or has received primary support from a social service agency? *

YES NO

- Consult with your guardians if you do not know the answer to any of these questions.

Is the parent or legal guardian upon whom you base your claim of residency a U.S. Citizen? *

YES NO

If not, is the parent or legal guardian upon whom you base your claim of residency a Permanent Resident of the U.S.? *

YES NO

Does this parent or guardian currently live in Texas? *

YES NO

If your parent or legal guardian is currently living in Texas, how many years have they been living here? *

3

If your parent or legal guardian is currently living in Texas, how many months (not including the years you entered above) have they been living here? *

4

Does your parent or legal guardian hold the title to residential real property in Texas? *

YES NO

- You will need to submit a notarized Residency Affidavit (Appendix A) to every school you apply to.

Residency Affidavit *

If you are not a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident, [please open the Residency Affidavit](#), print a copy, fill it out and submit it to the school to which you are applying.

I have completed this step OR I confirm it is not applicable to me because I'm a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident.

STEP 3: SELECT A SCHOOL AND APPLY

Search for colleges and universities, select, and apply.



Viewing 1 of 1 Sort by: **App deadline (closest to furthest)** ▾

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Undergraduate (four-year) • Fall 2025

Requires: ✕ Essay ✕ SAT/ACT Available: ✕ Scholarship application ⓘ

App deadline	App opens	Avg. tuition ⓘ	Graduation rate ⓘ
Aug 27, 2025	Aug 01, 2024	\$9,541	0%

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◀ First ◀ Previous **1** Next ▶ Last ▶

CHOOSING YOUR MAJOR

“WHAT ARE YOU MAJORING IN?” is perhaps a question you’ve heard recently. Another way of asking this is “What are you getting your degree on?”. So, do you know the answer to those questions? Let’s start with defining what a major is. A major refers to an academic field of study. For example, Political Science and Engineering are majors. A degree is what your chosen school will give you upon completion of a program of study, meaning you’ve completed all the needed classes in order to graduate. Before you get your degree & degree plan, you need to pick a major. Choosing a major can be a crucial decision for any student, and for undocumented students, it might come with additional considerations.

HERE ARE SOME DETAILS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- **SKILLS & INTERESTS:** Think about what you’re good at and what you enjoy doing. Consider your strengths, passions, and skills you want to develop further.
- **VALUES & GOALS:** Reflect on your values and long-term goals. What kind of impact do you want to make? What career path aligns with your values?
- **EXPLORE OPTIONS:** Look into various majors and careers. Research online, talk with professionals, and take advantage of resources at your school and community.
- **CONSIDER PRACTICALITY:** While passion is vital, consider the practicality of the major. Look up potential salaries and growth opportunities.
- **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:** Understand any legal limitations related to your status. Some majors may have specific requirements or barriers for undocumented folks. For example, careers that require you to get certified by the state of Texas will be difficult to fulfill as you need a Social Security Number for that.
- **NETWORK:** If possible, connect with other undocumented students or professionals. They can offer advice and share their experiences navigating similar situations.

AT LUPE, WE OFFER SUPPORT AND DELIVER RELEVANT INFORMATION WHILE PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE TO BUILD COMMUNITY. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO REACH OUT TO US!

- **BE FLEXIBLE:** Your major doesn’t necessarily dictate your career. Many careers accept diverse majors. You can focus on gaining relevant experiences and skills.
- **JOB SECURITY OUTSIDE OF THE US:** You deserve to thrive in the U.S. just like anyone else. Plus, you never know when you will be able to fix your status. It might be closer than you think. However, for some people, going back to their home country might be the best option. If you are considering this, you may want to consider careers that will have job security in your home country. There are cases of students that have obtained a college degree from the U.S., left for another country, and have become successful because of the credentials they earned here.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF & TRUST YOUR INTUITION. YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS DOES NOT DEFINE YOU OR YOUR CAPABILITIES. BELIEVE IN YOUR POTENTIAL AND FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Along with your college application, you may need to submit your personal statement at ApplyTexas if applying to a 4-year university. A personal statement is basically a college essay. ApplyTexas has 3 main essay prompts. Although, not all 3 are required to apply to schools in Texas. Every school has different requirements in terms of college essays so make sure to do your research. Writing a compelling personal statement requires careful thought, planning, and a focus on highlighting your unique strengths and experiences. Admissions officers read thousands of essays, so it's important to stand out and make a memorable impression. Your personal statement can increase your chances of getting into a school and can help with getting scholarships.

BELOW ARE PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP WITH YOUR ESSAY WRITING PROCESS:

UNDERSTAND THE PROMPT: Start by thoroughly reading and understanding the essay prompt. Make sure you address all aspects of the question in your essay.

BRAINSTORM IDEAS: Reflect on your experiences, challenges, values, and achievements. Take into consideration moments that have had a significant impact on your personal growth.

CREATE AN OUTLINE: A typical essay includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. In the introduction, you should grab the reader's attention with a compelling hook and provide a concise thesis statement.

TELL A STORY: Share a specific experience or anecdote that illustrates your unique qualities and strengths. Show, don't tell. Instead of saying you're determined, describe a situation in which your determination was demonstrated.

HIGHLIGHT YOUR UNIQUE QUALITIES: Think about your unique qualities, skills, and passions. What sets you apart from other applicants? Talk about any challenges you have overcome and how they've shaped who you are.

REVISE AND EDIT: Once completing your first draft, take a break and come back to it with fresh eyes. Check for grammar and spelling, while also paying attention to the overall flow and structure. Reach out to your teachers, counselors, parents, siblings, and friends for feedback and suggestions.

PROOFREAD AND FINALIZE: After making your last edits, proofread your essay one last time to make sure it's error-free.



The College Scholarship Leadership Access Program (CSLAP) is a nonprofit organization that provides students with resources regarding college access. You can visit their website for more tips to help you write your personal statement. <https://www.cslapofficial.com/essays>

ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST/TIMELINE

The following checklist/timeline can be helpful in regards to admissions. It guides you from the start of your Spring semester of Junior year all the way to December of your Senior year. As time goes by, begin to check off important actions to make sure you are on track with your college admissions process.

TARGET COMPLETION DATE	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
SPRING SEMESTER OF JUNIOR YEAR	Take the SAT, ACT and/or TSI college admissions tests. You can register for a test at the following links. www.collegeboard.com www.actstudent.org	Some schools are test optional, meaning they do not require you to submit your scores for admissions. However, it is highly encouraged to submit scores for scholarships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you receive free lunch at your school, you may be eligible for a fee waiver. • Talk to your school counselor for more information.
	Select your schools.	When choosing what schools to apply to take into consideration the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance- As an undocumented student, the Falfurrias checkpoint is a physical barrier that legally prevents you from moving up North. This doesn't have to prevent you from applying to those schools. In fact, you are eligible to attend those schools. However, it's important to keep in mind that you can't legally pass the checkpoint. • Degrees Offered- Make sure the schools you are applying to offer the degree you are interested in. • Tuition- Although, this is a very important factor to keep in mind, it should not prevent you from applying to a school.
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER OF SENIOR YEAR	Start Applications	This guide, especially the "Sample Apply Texas Application" portion, will be your bestie throughout this process. Have it handy to follow along. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can also get fee waivers for college applications. • Talk to your school counselor for more information.
	Get Affidavit of Intent notarized	You will need to provide a notarized affidavit to every school you apply to in order to get accepted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not sign the affidavit until you are with the notary public. • You will need a photo ID, this can be your school ID. • This form will grant you eligibility to pay in-state tuition and receive state financial aid (TASFA), if you qualify. • For a low cost, you can get the affidavit notarized at LUPE if you are a member. A student annual membership is \$20.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER OF SENIOR YEAR	Submit your applications before the deadline.	<p>Submit the following documents to the admissions office of each school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official sealed high school transcript or electronic transcript/TREx • Application fee (or fee waiver). • Notarized Affidavit of Intent. • Essays, Resume, and Letters of Recommendation. • Make sure that your SAT, ACT, and/or TSI scores have been received.
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER OF SENIOR YEAR	Make sure the schools you applied to have received all necessary documents.	Constantly check your email and online portal in case you receive notice of any missing documents.
FALL OF SENIOR YEAR	Submit your TASFA application.	<p>TASFA applications usually open on October 1 with the priority deadline being January 15 of the following year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These dates may change depending on the school year. Please talk to your counselor for any updates. • There's more information on TASFA in Chapter 3!
	Reach out to at least 3 recommenders.	Who will write a letter of recommendation for you? A teacher, coach, mentor? Make a list of who you will ask and reach out to them.

LIST OF RGV COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

NAME OF SCHOOL	LOCATION	TUITION
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY	1201 W University Dr, Edinburg, TX 78539 1 W University Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	\$9, 859
SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE	3201 Pecan Blvd, McAllen, TX 78501 (main campus)	\$2,460 for In-District \$2,610 for Out of District
TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE	1902 N Loop 499, Harlingen, TX 78550	Depends on specific programs
TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE	80 Ft Brown St, Brownsville, TX 78520	\$1,925 for In-District \$2,300 for Out of District
OUR LADY OF THE LAKE RGV	1650 S Main St, La Feria, TX 78559	\$15,556
TEXAS A&M HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER AT MCALLEN	6200 Tres Lagos Blvd, McAllen, TX 78504	\$11, 550

THE TUITION DEMONSTRATED HERE IS BASED ON 15 CREDITS PER SEMESTER. ADDITIONALLY, THESE TUITION RATES ARE FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE EACH YEAR. IT IS ENCOURAGED TO LOOK UP THE LATEST RATES AT EACH OF THE INSTITUTIONS' WEBSITES.

CHAPTER 3: FINANCIAL AID



Knowing how you're going to finance your education is one of the most important steps in the college application process. It can often break or make a student's decision to attend college. Take this as reassurance that there is plenty of financial help for undocumented students. Most of this aid is free money you can use to pay your tuition and other necessities like books.

Before we get into the different forms of financial aid available to you, it is important you understand some of the language that will be used in your student bill. Let's get started!

STUDENT BILL TERMINOLOGY

COST OF ATTENDANCE: The maximum amount a college may cost for one school year. Colleges take various things into consideration when calculating the cost of attendance like tuition, meal plan, fees, housing and more. Think of the cost of attendance as an estimate. For example, if you will not be living on campus then you will not be charged for housing and so on.

TUITION: The amount you owe to attend college for courses and instruction you register for.

IN-STATE TUITION: The amount charged to students that attend a college within their state of residence.

OUT OF STATE TUITION: The amount charged to students that attend a college outside of their state of residence. Since the students and their families have not contributed to the state's tax revenue their tuition will be higher than in-state students'.

CREDIT HOURS: The U.S. Department of Education defines a credit hour by a single semester credit hour as 1 hour per week of class time and 2 hours of student preparation time. Most courses are worth 3 credit hours but there are some that may be worth less such as labs. To simplify it, every course is worth about 3 credit hours per semester. In order to graduate with a Bachelor's degree you need to accumulate at least 120 credit hours.

FULL-TIME: To be considered a full-time student, you must be enrolled in 12 credit hours a semester. This is important for financial aid purposes because some scholarships may require you to be a full-time student.

PART-TIME: You will be considered a part-time student if you take anything less than 12 credit hours per semester.

TASFA

Unfortunately, undocumented students are not eligible for federal financial aid. However, if you qualify as a Texas resident through the Texas DREAM Act (Chapter 1), then you qualify for the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). TASFA was designed for students who are not eligible to apply for federal financial aid due to their immigration status, this includes undocumented students and certain categories of non-citizens. This application can be a fundamental support for financing college. The application is completely free, as is the financial aid you'll receive.

REQUIREMENTS:

- **Affidavit of Intent to become a permanent legal resident (Appendix A).**
- **Parent's income information from 2 years ago**
 - Tax return
 - Or Non-tax filer form (Appendix B)
- **Selective Service Registration (students assigned male at birth)**

If your parents do not file taxes you will need to submit a Non-tax filer form. We will talk more about this later!

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid offers services to the LGBTQ+ community such as support with name change and gender marker correction. For any concerns regarding this portion of the application, you can reach out to them at (956)996-8752.

Okay, let's break these down.

AFFIDAVIT OF INTENT: As discussed in Chapter 1, the Texas DREAM Act grants undocumented students the opportunity to go to college and to receive state financial aid. First, you must meet the bills' qualifications in order to be considered a Texas resident. Then you must turn in an affidavit of intent to every school you apply to. This affidavit will be needed for admissions and financial aid purposes.

PARENT'S INCOME INFORMATION: As long as you are a dependent of your parents, the school you are attending will need this information throughout your undergraduate years. The reason being is that TASFA awards aid on a needs basis. This basically means that the amount of financial aid you will receive from TASFA depends on how much money your parents make and other factors. Additionally, the application will always ask for your parents income information from 2 years ago. For example, your first semester of college will be Fall 2025 therefore you will need to provide your school with your parents 2023 income info. Your sophomore year will begin in the Fall of 2026 therefore you will need to provide your school with your parents 2024 income info. And so on...

SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION: This only applies to students assigned male at birth. In the United States, it is a legal obligation for most people assigned male at birth to register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. This is mandatory for students assigned male at birth between the ages of 18 to 25 and it is a requirement for TASFA. This is a way to ensure that the government has a record of eligible individuals who can be drafted in case of a national emergency. If you are 18 years old and not registered then you will be ineligible for financial aid. Of course, there are instances that may exempt you from registering. You can find this information at the Selective Service System website.



<https://www.sss.gov/register/who-needs-to-register/>

You can register for the Selective Service at your local post office. The post office has the form you need to fill out or you can download it by clicking the link below. Once you're done filling out the form you will need to mail it to the following address.



<https://www.sss.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Form-1-Resized.pdf>

**Selective Service System
P.O. Box 94739
Palatine, IL 60094-4739**

It usually takes 30 to 90 days to receive proof of registration. You will need to show this confirmation to your school in order for them to process your TASFA application.

LEGISLATION IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. CHECK IN WITH YOUR COUNSELOR FOR ANY CHANGES.

WHERE TO FIND IT



The TASFA application can be found on The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website.

<https://www.highered.texas.gov/our-work/empowering-our-students/tasfa/>

OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

TAXFILER: If your parents file their taxes and claim you as a dependent on them, then congrats the application process should be fairly easy. You would simply go to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, create an account using a personal email, and begin your application. After submitting the application, schools will ask you to provide them with your parents tax return from two years ago. And then you're pretty much done. Now all that's left to do is to constantly check your email and your school online portal, if you already have one, to make sure you accept the financial aid the school offers you.

- If your parents are undocumented as well they can file their taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). The ITIN was created solely so that undocumented individuals can file their taxes. Individuals can apply for an ITIN number at their nearest Social Security Administration Office or a tax preparation agency. LUPE members can apply for an ITIN at a lower cost at any of our offices.
- If your parents file their taxes and would like to claim you as a dependent on them then you will also need an ITIN number.

EVER SINCE EARLY 2024, TASFA HAS BEEN AN ONLINE APPLICATION. THE PAPER VERSION WILL CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE BUT IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO APPLY ONLINE AS YOU CAN AUTOMATICALLY SUBMIT THE APPLICATION TO UP TO 10 SCHOOLS IN TEXAS.

NON-TAXFILER: If your parents do not file taxes, don't worry you can still apply for TASFA. First things first, you need to [create](#) an account at The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, remember to use your personal email, then begin your application. Once you have submitted the application you're going to need a Non-Tax Filer form (Appendix B). This form states that your parents did not file **AND** are not required to file taxes for that year. The form also requires your parents to state their income from two years ago. You will need to get this form notarized before submitting it to the schools you sent a TASFA application to. You can submit it by mailing it or going to the school's financial aid office.

Disclaimer: If your parents make more than the threshold as required by the IRS, then your school may ask you for proof of income and will not process your TASFA application until you provide it. Sometimes the school may even ask for your parents to file their taxes. The chart below should help you assess this.

FILING STATUS	TAXPAYER AGE AT THE END OF 2023	YOU MUST FILE AN INCOME IF YOUR GROSS INCOME WAS AT LEAST:
SINGLE	UNDER 65	\$13,850
SINGLE	65 OR OLDER	\$15,700
HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	UNDER 65	\$20,800
HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	65 OR OLDER	\$22,650
MARRIED FILING JOINTLY	UNDER 65 (BOTH SPOUSES)	\$27,700
MARRIED FILING JOINTLY	65 OR OLDER	\$29,200
MARRIED FILING JOINTLY	65 OR OLDER (BOTH SPOUSES)	\$30,700
MARRIED FILING SEPARATELY	ANY AGE	\$5
QUALIFYING SURVIVING SPOUSE	UNDER 65	\$27,700
QUALIFYING SURVIVING SPOUSE	65 OR UNDER	\$29,200

THESE NUMBERS ARE OFTEN UPDATED ON A YEARLY BASIS. YOU CAN VISIT THE [IRS WEBSITE](#) FOR UPDATED NUMBERS.

IMPORTANT DATES

The application **usually** opens on **October 1st** with the priority deadline being **January 15** of the following year. Again, some school years may differ therefore ask your counselor about important dates. The priority deadline is the date by which you need to submit your application to be considered for the maximum amount of aid available. Meeting this deadline increases your chances of receiving aid because it allows institutions to allocate funds more efficiently. It is also important to know that TASFA has less funds compared to FAFSA because TASFA funds come from the state of Texas unlike FAFSA funds that come from the federal government. Meaning it is recommended to submit your application as soon as possible. With that being said, you will most likely receive aid even if you submit your application after the priority deadline, but the amount awarded could be reduced due to limited funds. However, it is understandable that specific circumstances may prevent you from meeting that priority deadline. Please don't let these circumstances prevent you from submitting your application at any point. Better late than never.

DEPENDENCY STATUS

YOU ARE CONSIDERED INDEPENDENT IF:

- You are married
- You are working on a master's or doctorate
- You serve in the U.S. armed forces or are a veteran
- You at anytime after the age of 13 were an orphan, ward of court, or in foster care
- You are an emancipated minor
- You have a court-ordered legal guardian
- You have children or dependents who live with and receive more than half of their support from you
- You are an unaccompanied youth who is homeless

If you can say yes to any of the above then you are considered independent. This means you have to provide schools with your income information, not your parents.

TASFA CASE STUDIES: COMMON SCENARIOS

Hello there! My name is Luis Castillo, and I am the former Director of Education at LUPE. During my time as a community organizer and college-readiness advisor, I had the opportunity to help many undocumented students like you access higher education. From Brownsville to Rio Grande City, I have seen almost every possible scenario, and I can say without a doubt that the number one question undocumented students have is: how will I pay for college?

As someone who went to college while undocumented, I know that it can be scary to think about what would happen if you do not receive any financial aid. While there is financial aid for undocu students in the form of TASFA, most of us do not fit perfectly in the fields of the application, and filling it out incorrectly could result in the application process being delayed or even denied. However, even in the toughest of the cases I have seen, people have found a way to reach their goals. Yes, every case is different, but there are some commonalities amongst most situations.

Thus, I have compiled some of the most common scenarios that I have come across while advising undocumented students along with some possible solutions.

“MY PARENTS DO NOT FILE TAXES.”

If your parents have never filed taxes before, or if they did not file the required year for your TASFA application, they can still report their income. At any point during the year, your parents can report their income for up to three prior fiscal years. This means that they can still file their income for the “prior-prior” year, which would be the one used for TASFA. However, it is important to keep in mind that the IRS will charge a fee for income reported late—on top of any income that is due. That said, you can submit a copy of your parents’ income tax form for your financial aid application even if there are overdue taxes.

As you have learned in this guide, there is a scale that indicates what yearly income is required to be reported. However, if your parents made more than \$400 in a year, they can still file their taxes even though it is not technically required (source: “Here’s who needs to file in 2024”. IRS website (2024). <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/heres-who-needs-to-file-a-tax-return-in-2024>).

Something to keep in mind is that if the income information you provide on your TASFA indicates that your parents must file an income tax, then the university will likely ask you to provide an income tax form in order to process your application. This can result in your application being delayed, which can lower your chances of receiving aid on time or the full amount you are eligible for.

“MY PARENTS FILED TAXES, BUT THEY DIDN’T CLAIM ME AS A DEPENDENT.”

If your parents only claimed their children with social security numbers when filing their taxes, leaving you out of their income tax report, you have two options:

- **OPTION 1:** You can have your parents file a 1040-X form (an amendment of their income tax). Your parents can then put you in their income tax form. However, this option may result in your parents losing tax credits (or benefits), which then have to be paid back to the IRS.
- **OPTION 2:** You can submit your parents’ income tax information even if they did not claim you as their dependent. According to the IRS, only children that have a social security number (SSN) can be claimed as dependents for tax purposes. While it is possible to include children that do not have a SSN by using an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN), you technically do not need to file an ITIN if you have not worked.

If you choose the second option, you may also provide a letter stating that you live with your parents and they provide for you along with your TASFA application. This can facilitate the review process of your application and prevent the need for further documentation. Nonetheless, it is the discretion of your college’s financial aid office to ask for more evidence.

Moreover, we advise parents to claim all dependents regardless of immigration status. This can prove useful in some immigration cases where the person needs to provide evidence of presence in the U.S. as is the case of those applying for DACA.

“ONLY ONE OF MY PARENTS FILE TAXES”

If you live with only one of your parents, then you are only required to submit that parent’s income information. However, you must also indicate that you only live with that parent in your ApplyTexas application.

Your financial aid application is based on the information you provided in your ApplyTexas. Thus, if you indicated that your parents are married and that you live with them, then you will be required to provide an income tax where they filed jointly.

You have to keep in mind that TASFA is a way for a college or university to determine your eligibility for financial aid based on your financial situation. Therefore, it is important that the information you provide on your ApplyTexas application matches the information present on your parents’ income tax form. Otherwise, the university may require more information resulting in your application being paused.

“I ACCIDENTALLY MARKED THAT I AM A U.S. CITIZEN IN MY APPLYTEXAS”

As we have discussed, your financial aid application is dependent on the information on your ApplyTexas. If you accidentally indicated that you are a U.S. citizen in the application, your college will then ask you to submit a FAFSA. If you made this mistake, contact the admissions office of the college you are applying immediately to let them know of the situation. Your college will either amend the application or ask you to submit another application, allowing you to then submit a TASFA.

“CAN I SUBMIT TASFA AFTER THE PRIORITY DEADLINE?”

SO, YOU HAVE COMPLETED TASFA AND COLLECTED ALL DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID, BUT THE PRIORITY DEADLINE HAS PASSED. SHOULD YOU STILL SUBMIT THE APPLICATION?

The answer is yes. The priority deadline is not the final deadline to submit TASFA. In fact, there is no actual deadline for TASFA. Therefore, if you missed the deadline by a few days or even weeks, you should submit it as there is still a chance that you receive financial aid. However, even though there is no final deadline to submit the application, you have to remember that the funds are limited. Thus, the longer you wait to submit TASFA, the higher the risk you run of not receiving financial aid.

NOW, WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU MISS THE PRIORITY DEADLINE BY MONTHS. FOR INSTANCE, IT IS SUMMER AND YOU STILL HAVE NOT COMPLETED YOUR FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION. SHOULD YOU STILL SUBMIT THE APPLICATION?

Again, the answer is yes. Even if there is one month left before the beginning of the Fall semester, it is recommended that you still submit your TASFA application as there could be a chance that you receive financial aid. Of course, availability of funds and processing times vary from college to college. In this scenario, if you do not receive financial aid or if your application is not processed on time, you may still apply for what is called an emergency loan. This should be your last resort as you are still required to pay the loan in full by the end of the semester. This is a great option if you know you will have the

funds to pay it on time. Each college has its own policy for applying for emergency loans, but these are available to undocumented students.

SO, WHEN IS IT TOO LATE TO SUBMIT TASFA?

If your goal is to attend college during the Fall semester, then submitting TASFA less than one month before classes begin would be considered “too” late. However, you should still submit it and attend classes in the Spring semester in January. Equally, you can wait until the next Fall semester to apply.

In conclusion, to maximize your chances of receiving financial aid, you should submit your application before the priority deadline. Even if that date has passed, you should still submit it; however, you have to be aware that there is a chance that you do not receive financial aid.

“I DO NOT LIVE WITH MY PARENTS”

According to TASFA, any person under the age of 24 that is unmarried and without children is considered a dependent and is required to submit income information of their legal guardian. This means that even if you are above the age of 18 or if you do not live with your parents, you may still be required to submit your parent’s or legal guardian’s financial information. However, there are situations that exempt the person from having to provide such information.

If you live with a relative that is not your court-appointed legal guardian—in other words, you live with your grandma but your parents never signed a document or appeared before a judge to grant your grandma your legal custody—then you are still required to submit your parents’ financial information even if you did not live with them during the prior-prior fiscal year. However, if you have no contact with your parents or if they live in another country and are unable to live here, you may be considered an **unaccompanied youth**. According to TASFA, an unaccompanied youth is a person who does not live within the physical custody of their parents or guardian. Usually, a high school counselor may determine this and put it on record. Nonetheless, if your high school counselor did not determine this, you should talk to your college’s financial aid advisor who can make this determination. Once you are labeled as an unaccompanied youth, then you are not required to provide your parent’s income information.

IF THIS IS YOUR EXPERIENCE, YOU SHOULD MEET WITH A HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR SO THAT YOU CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS AN UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH UNDER THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT. THIS CAN FACILITATE YOUR FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCESS THROUGHOUT YOUR COLLEGE CAREER.

Now, if your parents live in another country but they still support you financially, you may choose to submit the income tax declaration they filed in their country. The college would then determine your eligibility for financial aid based on the conversion of their income to dollars. It is important to keep in mind that this still needs to be their prior-prior income tax.

SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

Thank you Luis for that invaluable information! Now let's continue onto scholarships and grants.

TASFA is an aid to help pay your tuition. If for some reason, TASFA does not cover all of your tuition, scholarships and grants are great options to help pay the rest of it. Additionally, scholarships and grants can help with expenses such as books, access codes, perhaps buying a laptop. Although local scholarships and grants open to undocumented students are rare, there are so many national scholarships available for you to apply. There are two types of scholarships and grants, non-conditional and conditional.

- **NON-CONDITIONAL:** Free money without any requirements.
- **CONDITIONAL:** Scholarships or grants with conditions you must meet or you will lose the aid and possibly even owe money back. When applying check to see if the aid has any requirements and what the penalty is for not meeting them.

With that out of the way, let's talk about what differentiates scholarships from grants. Scholarships are typically awarded based on your achievements, skills, talents, or other criteria specified by the scholarship. They are often merit-based and may require maintaining certain academic standards or meeting criteria. Again, when you apply to a scholarship check to see what its requirements are so that you are aware of them.

WEBSITES WITH SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DADUMENTED & UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS:

- SCHOLARSHIPS A-Z
- UNITED WE DREAM
- THE DREAM U.S. SCHOLARSHIP
- IMMIGRANTS RISING
- HISPANIC SCHOLARSHIP CONSORTIUM
- MALDEF
- GOLDEN DOOR SCHOLARS

For local scholarships, consult with your high school counselor to see if they know of any scholarships open to undocumented students. Additionally, visit your chosen college or university's website and go through the scholarships listed. This may be a bit time consuming as you have to go through every scholarship's requirements, but you will most likely find a couple local scholarships you are eligible to apply for.

Now moving onto grants. Grants are usually need-based financial aid. They are awarded based on your financial circumstances or specific criteria outlined by the grant. Additionally, they are often provided by governments, institutions, or private organizations. Make sure to check any requirements when applying grants.

If you are applying to a 2-year institution like South Texas College, then you must complete and submit a Confirmation of Eligibility Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) and Texas Grant form (Appendix C). In most cases, the school will provide you with the form when you submit your TASFA application.

OTHER WAYS OF FINANCING COLLEGE

LOANS:

Private Student Loans can have high variable interest rates and are not required to offer the same repayment benefits as federal student loans. These types of loans generally cost more and typically require a credit check.

- Schools such as UTRGV offer Emergency Loans. In order to qualify for an Emergency Loan, you must be enrolled in classes and may not receive any other type of financial aid. The loan incurs an origination fee of 1% of the total amount borrowed for each emergency fee loan. These loans are required to be paid before the semester that the loan was taken out for ends. If the loan is not paid by then, you will not be able to register for the following semester until it is paid off.

LOANS SHOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED AS A LAST RESORT.

PAYING OUT OF POCKET/PAYMENT PLANS:

Of course, there is the option to pay for school out of pocket but we both know that isn't always an option for everyone. However, if you have the privilege to be able to do this you can pay for the semester all at once or you can sign up for a payment plan at your school's financial aid office.

CHAPTER 4: ACKNOWLEDGING A BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM & NAVIGATING LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS



In the immigrant community, there exists a misconception that hard work inevitably leads to recognition and reward within this country. This belief has created the “perfect immigrant” narrative, fostering the expectation that diligence and dedication will prevent certain situations. Reality often leaves many feeling disillusioned and disappointed. Unfortunately, this reality is shaped by a broken immigration system that fails to acknowledge our hard work and dedication. Despite these challenges, understanding and navigating the legal system is crucial. You have probably often wondered what legal remedies are available for your specific situation.

BELOW YOU WILL FIND SOME OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN FIX YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS

FAMILY PETITION:

You may qualify for legal status through a family member who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. This process involves an immediate relative sponsoring you for a green card, but it often comes with lengthy waiting periods and eligibility criteria. With a LUPE membership, you can make an appointment with our immigration lawyer for a consultation on this option.

EMPLOYMENT SPONSORSHIP:

If you secure a job offer from a U.S. employer willing to sponsor your visa, you may be able to obtain legal status through employment-based visas. This pathway can be competitive and require specific job qualifications and visa availability.

REFUGEE/ASYLUM:

If you fear persecution or have experienced past persecution in your home country you may seek asylum or refugee status in the United States. This requires demonstrating a well-founded fear of persecution and often involves a complex legal process.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS OPTION YOU CAN REACH OUT TO TEXAS RIO GRANDE LEGAL AID FOR ASSISTANCE AT (956)996-8752

VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

If you have been subjected to abuse by a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse, parent, or child you may be eligible for immigration relief independently of your abuser.

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING THIS, PLEASE CONTACT MUJERES UNIDAS FOR HELP. THEIR SERVICES ARE OPEN TO EVERYONE. THEIR HOT-LINE IS 1-800-580-4879.

Each of these paths has its challenges and eligibility requirements. Seeking guidance from an immigration attorney can be crucial for understanding your options and navigating complex legal procedures effectively.

CHAPTER 5: WELL BEING & THRIVING IN COLLEGE



College is a time for growth, exploration, and learning. You will do A LOT of growing during this journey. A big part of growing will come from the lessons you will learn and experiences you will go through. Of course like with anything in life being undocumented will affect your time in college. All the emotions you will feel are completely valid, so feel them. However, don't let the emotions and thoughts consume you. Spending time on circumstances you cannot control is a losing game. My advice is to focus on what you can control. The following strategies will help you not only survive but thrive during your college journey.

STRATEGIES

MENTAL HEALTH: The stress of navigating college as an undocumented student can take a toll on your mental health. Universities often offer counseling services (included in your tuition and fees), which can be a safe space to discuss your concerns and develop coping strategies. Additionally, practicing a form of self-care can help manage stress. Some people go on nature walks, others watch their comfort shows/movies. We all have our own form of self-care, it's important you find yours.

EMBRACING SUPPORT SYSTEMS: Building a support network outside of your family is important. Seek out resources on campus like multicultural centers and student organizations/clubs, that offer guidance and a sense of community. As well as local and national organizations that may offer resources. Connecting with other undocumented students and allies can provide invaluable emotional support and practical advice.

LUPE IS A GREAT PLACE TO RECEIVE VALUABLE INFORMATION WHILE BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY OF UNDOCUMENTED FOLKS.

TIME MANAGEMENT: Develop a schedule that balances academics, work (if applicable), and personal time. Prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and allocate time for self-care activities to prevent burnout. Make time for friends, family, and yourself!

BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM WITH FACULTY: Cultivate a relationship with professors, advisors, and mentors. They can offer guidance, academic support, and sometimes advocate on your behalf.

FINANCIAL PLANNING: Investigate scholarship opportunities and financial aid options available to you. Managing your finances effectively can alleviate stress related to tuition and living expenses.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Familiarize yourself with your legal rights as an undocumented person. Understanding your situation can empower you to make informed decisions and seek appropriate assistance when needed.

**YOU CAN VISIT THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS.
[HTTPS://WWW.ACLU.ORG/KNOW-YOUR-RIGHTS/IMMIGRANTS-RIGHTS](https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/immigrants-rights)**

STAY POSITIVE AND RESILIENT: Thriving in college as an undocumented student involves resilience, determination, and utilizing available resources. Remember, you are not alone on this journey. Seek and embrace your community. Focus on your goals, celebrate achievements, and keep a positive mindset.

EMBRACING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

The Rio Grande Valley is a unique region for many reasons. One being the fact that it is in between two barriers, the U.S./Mexico border and the Falfurrias checkpoint. Undocumented folks can't go south or north. This inbetweenness can often lead to feeling stuck. When these feelings arise it's important to focus on what you can control and what is available to you. Sometimes visiting a new place can spark joy and hope. There are so many gems in the Valley that you should visit. You could easily find them with a quick google search, "What to do in the RGV ". My personal favorites are downtown Brownsville and the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg. There are some honorable mentions such as Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen and Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Alamo. For this portion I wanted to give you more hands-on options and opportunities to go into welcoming spaces that can help you build community, which is why I have asked my friend, Out in the 956, to put something together for you.

A LETTER FROM OUT IN THE 956

I am a creative and cultural promoter from Palmview, Texas. As the creator of Out In The 956, I use my online platform to showcase local creatives, businesses, individuals, and special events within the Rio Grande Valley community. Shining a light on RGV Creatives for what they do!

What drove me to create Out In The 956 was community engagement, being involved, meeting new people, learning about them. Everyone has a reason for what they put out there. We see

things from our own perspective, but understanding the view of the individual brings insight into what is in front of us. From their art, interests, hobbies, business, a local gathering, or special event. There's a story to be told, a gem to uncover.

When it came to the task at hand. I thought about social media and places that have allowed myself and others to be hands on. While I love going out to a show there's always the weekday/ weekend workshop around the corner. If there's something I live by that's to try something new. Workshops, workshops vary in activity, vary in mediums, vary in conversations, topics, themes, and individuals who attend. Do you like writing or have thought about writing? There's unfolded poetry! Do you like movies or want to engage yourself in a more film-media crowd? There's Entre! Every single one of these locations and social media outlets are posting a weekly/bi-weekly event. ***THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING IN THE VALLEY!***

I've experienced and built relationships with these folks that I could've written about them but it was best to hear from the founders, staff members, and artists behind these social media platforms and locations that they've dreamt about, conceptualized, and brought to life.

Follow [**@outinthe956**](#) on Instagram for more info!

NEVER BEFORE ZINE

Never-Before-Zine is an autonomous artist collective participating in collaborative and personal practices in the RGV. Our artists come from different backgrounds, levels of skill and work in a variety of media, but our work connects through zine making, DIY art education and local art preservation.

Collective members facilitate a variety of skill sharing and collaborative art making events aimed at getting the community to participate in new ways.

We are currently working on hosting an art swap, community art salon and hosting a circulatory zine library composed of materials contributed by local artists. We would like to extend an invitation to become a member to any and all RGV residents, so long as they are community-minded and respectful.

Follow [**@neverbeforezine**](#) on Instagram for more info!

BEYOND BORDERS BOOK CLUB

Beyond Borders Book Club is a community of readers who are passionate about creating change through art and literature! We are committed to learning more about the issues that define our world: immigration, racism, class, education, etc. We believe that in talking and reading about these issues, we can learn how to better advocate and take action.

Join us every month at the Pharr Memorial Library from 11AM-12:30PM. Food and snacks are always available!

Follow @beyondbordersbookclub on Instagram for more info!

TRUCHA

Trucha has always been committed to showcasing a narrative of the Rio Grande Valley from a more holistic and progressive lens. As a multimedia nonprofit organization, we aim to uplift and shift the culture and social movements of migrant and queer communities in the RGV through sharing stories, community journalism, videography, and creative programming. Our vision is to cultivate a grassroots narrative of the frontera with movement journalism, documentaries, artistic opportunities, local partnerships with organizations, and building a strong foundation of storytellers throughout the Texas borderlands.

Students can find Trucha at local events throughout the year that focus on arts, journalism, and community projects. Events will be announced primarily through our Instagram. Additionally, if students wish to engage in movement journalism, they are encouraged to pitch stories that relate to our mission through our pitch process. If anyone has any questions, they are welcome to send an email to hello@truchargv.com.

Follow @truchargv on Instagram for more info!

UNFOLDED POETRY

So unfolded poetry project really is a specific service action. It is really and truly our mission to enable writers, thinkers, feelers artists to listen, right, and speak. It's a three-fold project because they're in all aspects of life, especially an artistry needs to be balances and explorations.

Listen by Sitting in spaces with like-minded thinkers or people who don't think similarly to you whatsoever. Listen because this helps create intrinsic questioning. Do I believe with what they believe, what they're saying? If I do why, if I don't, why not? If it is, why not, what do I believe in?

Why is it different? We should consistently and constantly be questioning ourselves. So sometimes these questions can lead us further from ourselves or closer to ourselves. These are all fantastic things, especially for an artist for a writer. That's balance. Now, That creates stirring that creates thought processes, that may be more comfortable with or maybe uncomfortable with the next thing is to understand it to reflect it.

Write. Write. It all down. If it's who, what, where, when, why, how, and yet so important sit down write about it and it doesn't need to be a fluid action. It needs to be Uh, just raw authenticity

unfiltered. Thought processes just being translated from your mind to your heart. Now through a pencil onto paper, and it's captured. That's something that's really terrifying.

Sometimes is once you come and see something you wrote it, right? So you created it. It's an existence. And now there's this you have to confront it, you have to contend with it, sit with it, understand it. And that's where Poem starts. Poem starts. From the listening. Now, put into writing.

Edit it. Turn it into statements. Turn it into continued dialogue because that's a poetry really is I could hear your work and be like, huh, and I could respond to it in my own writing or i can elaborate on it with my own writing. So really what we are is we're capturing the humanity that we are experiencing in the presence.

We are only almost memorializing some of the past experiences that are perhaps not what we want to have featured on the wall then we don't necessarily want that to be showcased, but still important to our current character. Um, And then once we have that, we have statements, we have truth, we have um, person We can speak it now.

Why? Because we questioned it, we reflected it and now we can really give it life and let it be testimony. It's like when you say something and it's not so profound or meaningful to you, but you see somebody else's eyes light up and be like, I understand that I relate to that.

I've been through that too. And there's like a commiseration. That happens there. There's a human connection and that's what happens. In communities. But really, what that does is that reinforces my person now? Maybe now I'm encouraged to continue to explore my own character. My own, um, Experience that maybe made no sense in that present moment, but now, some truth comes to fruition.

So, Unfold its goal. Truly is to inspire you to lead you through guided activities through our workshops. The poems, through our monthly poetry challenges. And, Now, moving forward. Um, Our topic talks. And, Our continued open mics. Because that's how we practice who we are because we're the only person who could represent you and yes there are people who are like you similar to you care about the same things as you but there is no one else. Like you and if i say something or if avi or Sonalim (Unfolded board members) on, well, pause or say something, We create different connections to different types of people because no one person could reach everyone and diversity.

So important, especially in poetry and in writing and in the presentation of it and that's where, um, speak truly comes in. Folded poetry project encourages you to practice your written and spoken voice. Because now, in any space, whether creative professional or personal, you will be able to In a healthy constructive way, in a way that can create impact, communicate, your self, and represent yourself in a way that makes all the difference and that is truly what we are trying to hone in ourselves in one another and in every workshoper who comes to our Events and engages with us.

Whether it's in person or online.

Email - unfoldedpoetryproject@gmail.com
Instagram: [@unfoldedpoetryproject](https://www.instagram.com/unfoldedpoetryproject)

ENTRE

ENTRE is a community film center and regional archive that focuses on the creation, exhibition, and preservation of community-made cinema, documentary, and video art. Located in the borderlands of the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, ENTRE's mission is to provide access, knowledge, and skills in the realm of filmmaking, inviting more voices to document, share and archive the vast narrative of US/Mexico border communities. As an archive, ENTRE focuses on the collection and preservation of home movies and oral histories from the region, crucial components that provide insight into our collective past through the archiving of time, place, and history. ENTRE was co-founded in 2021 by artists C. Díaz and Andres Sanchez, both Valley natives with professional experience in film and video production and moving image archival and preservation.

ENTRE offers free and low-cost workshops, screenings and other educational programming for all ages. You can learn more about ENTRE's offerings at www.entrefilmcenter.org.

IG: @entrefilmcenter

CACTUS VALLEY

Cactus Valley Art is happy to have found their home in the Historic Downtown District of Harlingen, Texas. We're a small independently owned art supply store. Our mission is to make art accessible to all by holding space, providing opportunity, and sourcing materials for our community in the RGV.

We hold space through our various classes and workshops which allows people to come together, having meaningful conversations and make connections with each other.

We provide opportunity through partnering with artists in the community to host a class or throw an event. As well as providing people with the opportunity to show their work in our gallery space.

We source materials that our community is directly asking for such as clay and ceramic supplies. We put a huge importance in carrying brands that meet our standards both in quality of product as well as brands we are proud to stand behind ethically. We carry several brands that come from small businesses across the USA, many of which are Woman Owned, POC Owned, or LGBTQIA+ Owned.

Follow @cactusvalleyart on instagram for more info!



Life after college can be daunting to anyone. “Where am I going to work?” is a question that haunts most college students throughout their last year of college. For undocumented students, this question is a recurring guest star in our brains. Life after college is probably something you have been thinking about lately, way before starting college. That’s because you know your immigration status prevents you from accessing the workforce in the same way as your peers. Unlike your peers, you face legal restrictions that limit your access to certain opportunities. Let me answer the question that you’re probably still curious about:

DOES AN UNDOCUMENTED PERSON HAVE WORK AUTHORIZATION? No.

CAN AN UNDOCUMENTED PERSON WORK? Absolutely!

NOW, LET’S GET INTO THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING LIFE AFTER COLLEGE.

FAQ

WILL I BE ABLE TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE IF I AM UNDOCUMENTED?

Yes, you will be able to graduate from college as an undocumented student. Your immigration status should not prevent you from receiving your diploma and attending your graduation ceremony. You will get your physical degree in the mail about a month after your graduation so make sure your full legal name is on that paper. You never know if at any point in your life you can use your degree in your home country.

CAN I PURSUE FURTHER EDUCATION, SUCH AS GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Yes, you can pursue further education such as graduate school. Graduate school may be more difficult to finance than your undergraduate studies. However, there are scholarships, fellowships, and loans available.

WILL I BE ELIGIBLE FOR IMMIGRATION RELIEF IF I GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE?

Graduating from college does not guarantee you immigration relief. Every immigration case is different. Therefore, it is important you consult with an immigration lawyer on your particular case.

CAN I PURSUE A CAREER IN MY FIELD OF STUDY WITHOUT A SSN?

It truly depends on your field of study. There are fields of study that lend themselves to be able to build a freelance career such as Graphic Design and Computer Science. On the other hand, you will not be able to pursue a career in fields of study that require you to take a state exam such as Teaching and Nursing due to needing a SSN. Make sure to take this into consideration when choosing your major.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT THAT DON'T REQUIRE EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION?

Yes! Alternative pathways to entrepreneurship as an undocumented person include freelancing and independent contractorship. These are great ways to start your own business and be your own boss. In fact, with an ITIN, you can start your own Limited Liability Company (LLC).

YOU CAN TAKE A LOOK AT IMMIGRANTS RISING'S "LIFE AFTER COLLEGE" GUIDE, WHICH DISCUSSES ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT IN MORE DETAIL. [HTTPS://IMMIGRANTSRSISING.ORG/](https://immigrantsrising.org/)

HOW DO I HANDLE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY IMMIGRATION STATUS DURING JOB INTERVIEWS?

It's important to remain honest while also protecting your privacy when answering questions about your immigration status. You can provide the necessary information without going into unnecessary details.

IF YOU HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO US AT LUPE. WE CAN DISCUSS YOUR OPTIONS TOGETHER.



Getting involved in your community can be a powerful way to advocate for yourself and others, especially as an undocumented student. By joining forces with like-minded people and organizations, you can amplify your voice, create change and meet people going through similar experiences. Not sure where to begin? That's okay. You can follow the steps listed below.

STEPS TO GETTING INVOLVED

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR PASSIONS & INTERESTS

Reflect on what issues matter most to you. Is it college access? Immigration? Healthcare? Identifying the issues that inspire you to take action will lead you to organizations or causes that align with your values.

STEP 2: RESEARCH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Look for local organizations, advocacy groups, clubs and nonprofits that focus on the issues you care about. These organizations will most likely provide support, resources, and opportunities for activism. Reach out to them to learn more about their work and how you can get involved.

BELOW YOU WILL FIND A LIST OF A FEW ORGANIZATIONS IN THE RGV:

La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)

Instagram: @lupe_rgv

LUPE Votes

Instagram: @lupevotes

LUPE Youth

Instagram: @lupe_youth

Casa Orgullo

Instagram: @casaorgullorgv

South Texas Equality Project

Instagram: @southtexasequalityproject

Texas Rising at UTRGV

Instagram: @texasrisingrgv

Planned Parenthood South Texas

Instagram: @ppsouthtexas

Frontera Fund

Instagram: @fronterafundrgv

STEP 3: ATTEND EVENTS AND MEETINGS

All of the organizations listed above host events, workshops, and meetings where you can learn, network, and take action. Attend these meetings to connect with fellow activists, hear from speakers, and stay up to date on current issues.

STEP 4: VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME & SKILLS

Offer to volunteer with the organizations of your choice to support their initiatives. From assisting with their event planning to outreach efforts, your contributions can make a difference.

STEP 5: ORGANIZE & MOBILIZE

Take initiative to organize events, campaigns, or initiatives that address the needs of your community. Mobilize your peers to work towards common goals and create change.

By getting involved in your community and advocating for change, you can empower yourself and pave the way for a brighter future for undocumented youth and their families. Plus, you might make some life-long friends along the way.

APPENDIX A

RESIDENCY AFFIDAVIT

SOME OF THESE APPENDICES ARE UPDATED ON A YEARLY BASIS. PLEASE VISIT EACH WEBSITE FOR THE MOST CURRENT VERSIONS.

- **RGV FOCUS TOOLKIT:**

Adopted January 2012

Figure: 19 TAC §21.25(c)

Chart I

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS

§
§
§

COUNTY OF _____

Before me, the undersigned Notary Public, on this day personally appeared _____
known to me, who being by me duly sworn upon his/her oath, deposed and said:

1. My name is _____. I am _____ years of age. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated herein and they are all true and correct.
2. I graduated or will graduate from a Texas high school or received my GED certificate in Texas.
3. I resided in Texas for thirty-six months leading up to graduation from high school or receiving my GED certificate.
4. I have resided or will have resided in Texas for the 12 months immediately preceding the census date of the semester in which I will enroll in _____ (college/university).
5. I have filed or will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States as soon as I am eligible to do so.

In witness whereof, this _____ day of _____, _____.

(Signature)

(Printed Name)

(Student I.D.#)

(Student Date of Birth)

SUBSCRIBED TO AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME, on the _____ day of _____, _____, to certify which witness my hand and official seal.

Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS

§
§
§

COUNTY OF _____

Before me, the undersigned Notary Public, on this day personally appeared _____, known to me, who being by me duly sworn upon his/her oath, deposed and said:

1. My name is _____. I am _____ years of age. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated herein and they are all true and correct.
2. I graduated or will graduate from a Texas high school or received my GED certificate in Texas.
3. I resided in Texas for thirty-six months leading up to graduation from high school or receiving my GED certificate.
4. I have resided or will have resided in Texas for the 12 months immediately preceding the census date of the semester in which I will enroll at **The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**.
5. I have filed or will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States as soon as I am eligible to do so.

In witness whereof, this _____ day of _____, _____.

(Student Signature)

(Printed Name)

(Student ID #)

(Student Date of Birth)

SUBSCRIBED TO AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME, on this _____ day of _____, _____, to certify which witness my hand and official seal.

Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

APPENDIX B

NON-TAX FILER FORM

- UTRGV:**

Fall 2023
Spring 2024
Summer 2024



2023-2024
Academic Year

2023-2024 INCOME INFORMATION FOR NON-TAX FILERS (Student's Income)

STXS24

Student First Name: _____ Student Last Name: _____

ID: _____ D.O.B.: _____

_____ and _____ am/are writing this
(Student) (Spouse, if applicable)

letter to confirm that I/we did not and are not required to file an income tax return for the 2021 year. I/we worked and earned wages in the amount of

\$ _____ and \$ _____ for a total
(Student's wages) (Spouse's wages, if applicable)

combined wages of \$ _____ from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

I/we understand that we may be required to file if it is mandated according to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. If you need additional information, please contact us at

_____.

Sincerely,

(Student's Signature)

(Spouse's signature, if applicable)

Submitting documents. *You may submit your documents in several ways:*

- Email to: tasfa@utrgv.edu
- By mail to: **UTRGV U Central**, Visitors Center 1.113, 1201 W. University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539
- Physical Drop off to locations listed below:

Brownsville U Central Location: The Tower, Main 1.100 One West University Blvd. Brownsville, Texas 78520 Ph: (888) 882-4026	Edinburg U Central Location: Student Services Bldg., First Floor 1201 West University Drive Edinburg, Texas 78539 Ph: (888) 882-4026
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Income Statement for Non-Tax Filers 2023-2024

Individuals who do **NOT** have a Social Security Number, an Individual Taxpayer ID or an Employer ID Number and did not file an income tax return must fill out this form.

STC ID: A _____ Student Name: _____

Select one option below:

I/We _____ and/or _____ do not have a social security
Parent 1/Student **Parent 2/Spouse**

number, Individual Taxpayer Identification Number or an Employer Identification Number. I/We did not file an income tax return in 2021, nor did I/we file with a spouse because I/we do not have a SSN. I/We worked in _____ from _____ to _____
(city and state) (month) (month)

The total I/We earned in 2021 was \$ _____.

I/We _____ and/or _____ do not have a social security
Name of non-tax filer **Name of non-tax filer**

number, Individual Taxpayer Identification Number or an Employer Identification Number. I/We did not file an income tax return in 2021, nor did I/we file with a spouse. I/we did not work in 2021. I/We received the following sources of untaxed income in 2021.

List sources of untaxed income (if any):

Source of Untaxed Income	Amount
	\$
	\$

Please sign below:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Spouse Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Parent 1 Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Parent 2 Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

- **Confirmation of Eligibility Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) and Texas Grant form:** <https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/publication/guidelines-manuals/teog-fy-2023-guidelines/>
-

STUDENT RESOURCES

- **RGV FOCUS' Resource Guide for College Access: Advising DREAMERS in the RGV**
- **Immigrants Rising Life After College Guide**
- **United We Dream Student Guidebook**
- **New York State Youth Leadership Council**
- **The Road to College: A College Guide for New York Immigrant Students by New York State Youth Leadership Council**
- **Big Future - College Board- What's the True Cost of Attendance? Know Before You Go**
- **ACLU's Know Your Rights "Immigrants' Rights"**
- **The Best Schools - From Associate to Doctorate: A Complete Guide to College Degree Levels**

GLOSSARY

- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** People that came to the United States as children that meet certain criteria may request consideration of deferred action for a period of 2 years. They are also eligible for a work authorization.
- **Undocumented:** Immigrants who resign in the U.S. without a legal immigration status.
- **Immigrant:** A person who moves to another country with the intention of resigning there.
- **Immigration Status:** Refers to the way in which a person is present in the U.S.
- **DREAMers:** Immigrant youth who were brought to the U.S. when they were minors. This term originated from the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Some DREAMers today have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Others remain undocumented.
- **Legislation:** The preparation and passing of laws by a legislative body through its lawmaking process.
- **Texas Resident:** Residence refers to where you live. For admissions & financial aid purposes, an undocumented student becomes a Texas resident through the requirements of the Texas DREAM Act.
- **GED:** Stands for General Educational Development Test. The GED credential is equivalent to a high school diploma.
- **Notarized Affidavit:** A document in which a person swears that the information they provided is true and correct. The affidavit gets notarized by a notary public.
- **Notice of Action:** An official communication sent to an individual to inform them of a decision or progress on their immigration case.
- **In-state Tuition:** The amount charged to students that attend a college within their state of residence.
- **Out of State Tuition:** The amount charged to students that attend a college outside of their state of residence.
- **State Financial Aid:** Monetary assistance provided by state governments to help its residents pay for higher education. This financial aid comes in different forms such as grants, scholarships, loans. Perhaps the most common is the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA).
- **Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA):** A form used by non-citizen Texas residents to apply for state financial aid for higher education.
- **Institution:** An organization founded for educational purposes. A college or university.
- **Degree:** What your chosen university will give you upon completion of a program of study.
- **Privately Funded:** Refers to financial support or resources provided by non-governmental sources.
- **Tuition:** The amount you owe to attend college for classes and instruction.
- **Privilege:** Special advantage or right possessed by someone.
- **Social Security Number:** A number assigned to specific individuals in the United States used to track social security benefits and other identification purposes.
- **Falfurrias Checkpoint:** A U.S. Border Patrol station located in Brooks

County, Texas approximately 70 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

- **Misinformation:** False or inaccurate information that is spread.
- **Standardized Tests:** Exams administered and scored in a consistent manner across all test-takers to assess and compare the performance of individuals.
- **ApplyTexas:** An online application platform used by students to apply to public universities and colleges in Texas.
- **International Student:** Non-immigrant visitors who come to the U.S. temporarily to attend college information and develop professional or social contacts.
- **Residency Affidavit:** A sworn statement verifying a person's residency status, it is required to establish eligibility for in-state tuition.
- **First Generation:** Individuals who are the first in their family to attend and graduate from college.
- **Networking:** Building and maintaining professional relationships to exchange information, resources, and opportunities.
- **Non-profit Organizations:** Entities that operate for charitable, educational, or social purposes rather than profit.
- **Internships:** Temporary work experiences provided to students or recent graduates, offering practical training and exposure to a particular industry.
- **Mentor:** An experienced and trusted advisor that provides guidance, support, and knowledge to someone less experienced.
- **Assistantships:** A form of financial aid open to graduate students in which a student assists a professor.
- **Fellowship:** A training program in which individuals perform research and develop skills to apply in a professional setting
- **Freelance:** Working for different companies, people, organizations rather than being employed by one entity.
- **Contract Work:** An independent contractor is hired for a specific project or certain time period for a set fee.
- **Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN):** A tax processing number issued by the International Revenue Service (IRS) to individuals who do not have a Social Security Number but are required to pay taxes.
- **CommonApplication:** An online platform that allows students to apply to multiple colleges and universities using a single application. This includes schools outside of Texas.
- **Personal Email:** An email address associated with someone's personal identity. Definitely to an email provided by a school or work place.
- **LUPE Membership:** An annual membership that gives you access to our low-cost or free services and our local neighborhood leadership development programs. Our members decide our priorities and lead our campaigns. The membership, which includes a photo ID, is \$40 per individual, or \$60 per couple, and \$20 for students.

Included with membership Free: First consultation, English & Citizenship classes, and an accidental death benefit of \$4000.

Included at affordable prices: Income Tax filing preparation, acquiring an ITIN, immigration cases, and translation of official documents.

- **Major:** An area of study chosen by a student as their primary focus during their college or university education.
- **Degree Plan:** An outline of roadmap that outlines the courses and

requirements a student must complete in order to graduate/earn a degree.

- **Career:** A person's chosen occupation or profession.
- **Federal Financial Aid:** Monetary assistance provided by the U.S. government to help students pay for their higher education. This includes grants, loans, and work-study programs.
- **Non-citizens:** Individuals who reside in a country but do not possess citizenship of that country, often referred to as residents or immigrants.
- **Assigned Male at Birth:** Refers to the designation given to an individual's sex at the time of their birth based on physical characteristics.
- **Dependent:** A person, usually a child or family member, who relies on another person for financial support and is claimed as such on tax returns.
- **Confirmation of Eligibility Texas Educational Opportunity Grant & Texas Grant:** A verification process conducted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to determine the eligibility of students for these state-funded financial aid programs.
- **Work Authorization:** Official permission by a government that allows a person to legally work within a specific jurisdiction.

