



COLLEGE IS POSSIBLE

A GUIDE FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS



COLLEGE IS POSSIBLE CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE

Chicago Public Schools recognizes there is a growing need for education beyond high school.

The need for postsecondary education has increased substantially, even for occupations not usually associated with book learning. In fact, seventy percent of all new jobs created by 2008 will require at least some postsecondary education (Carnevale and Fry, 2002). ***The mission of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development is to substantially increase the number of Chicago Public Schools students who continue their education after high school and who complete a certificate, associate, or baccalaureate degree program.***

Through providing guidance, academic enrichment opportunities and financial resources to students, parents and high schools throughout Chicago, the Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development aims to ensure that students are prepared for the academic and social environment of higher education and are equipped with a good understanding of the viable financial resources to persist to degree completion at a variety of colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Undocumented students often face additional obstacles when pursuing postsecondary education. In this guide the term “undocumented” students refers to students who live in the United States with no documentation stating U.S. citizenship or legal residency. **The Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development is committed to supporting all CPS students in their pursuit of higher education.** We have created this resource guide to inform and assist undocumented students with the college selection and application process, especially addressing the financial aspects of pursuing postsecondary education.

This guide is supplemental to all other postsecondary planning materials. Undocumented students and their families should use this guide in addition to visiting their guidance counselor and postsecondary staff. Please visit our website at www.postsecondary.cps.k12.il.us for more information on making postsecondary education a reality.

WHY GO TO COLLEGE?

- A college degree provides intellectual, social, and economic benefits.
- The college experience enables students to exercise responsibility, gain independence, and build strong social ties.
- Individuals with a college degree have increased career options and are more likely to be employed.
- College graduates earn more over their lifetime than those who do not continue their education after high school.

COLLEGE TYPES & COLLEGE COSTS

"Postsecondary education" includes any education beyond secondary school (high school). This includes community colleges, vocational training, four-year colleges, online colleges, graduate and professional schools such as law school or medical school. The word "college," however, specifically refers to undergraduate education. Undergraduate education includes 2-year colleges, where one can earn an associate's degree, and 4-year colleges, where one can earn a bachelor's degree. There are many different types of colleges including public and private and in-state and out-of-state schools. It is important to understand the different costs to attend the different types of schools.

THE AVERAGE COST OF ATTENDANCE FOR ONE YEAR AT:

	PUBLIC 2-Year College	PUBLIC 4-Year College		PRIVATE 4-Year College
		In-State	Out-of-State	
Tuition & Fees	\$2,076	\$5,132	\$12,423	\$20,082
Books & Supplies	\$773	\$817	\$817	\$807
Transportation	\$1,146	\$743	\$743	\$645
Personal Expenses	\$1,608	\$1,637	\$1,637	\$1,183
Room & Board (living off campus without parents)	\$5,747	\$6,269	\$6,269	\$7,106
Total/year	\$11,350	\$14,598	\$21,889	\$29,823

Source: College Board annual survey of 2,900 postsecondary two-year and four-year public and private institutions titled "Trends in College 2004." As printed in Destination University by the Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund.

From the chart, it is clear that 2-year colleges are the least expensive of all college types. However, it is important to understand your financial aid options before deciding which schools are affordable or unaffordable.

IN-STATE TUITION

Students planning to go to a public college in the state where they reside pay less tuition than students who are coming from different states.

House Bill 60 - In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students (Signed into law as Public Act 93-0007) states that undocumented students in Illinois may receive in-state tuition benefits if they:

- Have graduated from an Illinois high school;
- Have lived in Illinois for three or more years; and
- State in an affidavit (oath made in writing) that they would be filing an application to become permanent residents as soon as they are eligible.

HB0060/Public Act 93-0007 does not guarantee admission to a state university. Students must meet admissions requirements.

To view the text of Public Act 093-0007, please visit

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=093-0007&GA=093>

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL AID

GOVERNMENTAL FINANCIAL AID

While an Illinois student who is undocumented may qualify for in-state tuition benefits, this student does not qualify for federal or state financial aid (e.g. Stafford loans, Pell grants, work-study).

The federal government uses the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to compute need.

If a student **is** a US Citizen but one or more parents are undocumented, the student is eligible for federal aid. When filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the parents' social security number must be filled out as 000-00-0000.

You can receive federal student aid if you are a U.S. citizen, an eligible noncitizen, or a U.S. national. If you have changed from a noncitizen to a citizen, you should contact the Social Security Administration to update your citizenship status. *Generally*, you are an eligible noncitizen if you are:

- ***U.S. permanent resident and have an Alien Registration Card (I-551);***
- ***Conditional permanent resident (I-551C); or***
- ***The holder of an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from the Department of Homeland Security showing any one of the following designations "Refugee," "Asylum Granted", "Parolee" (I-94 confirms paroled for a minimum of one year and status has not expired), or "Cuban-Haitian Entrant."***

If you are in the U.S. on a F1 or F2 student visa, or a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa or a G series visa (pertaining to international organizations) you are not an eligible noncitizen.

Undocumented students should begin the process of legalizing their status as early as possible. To learn how citizenship process works, look under "citizenship" in this guide.

For more information about federal financial aid, please visit:

www.studentaid.ed.gov and www.fafsa.ed.gov.

If either the parent or student supplies a social security number which fails to match, the FAFSA will be rejected.

PRIVATE FINANCIAL AID/ PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Some private scholarships are available to undocumented students, and scholarships are a great way to cover the costs of a college education. A scholarship is a form of financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Scholarships range from covering the cost of books for one year, to covering complete tuition and room and board for four years.

Scholarships are awarded based on test scores, various application materials, financial need, or some combination of these. They are offered by universities as well as independent scholarship providers. Since scholarships are most often awarded based on academic achievement, it is very important that students perform their very best in school and continuously work to improve their grade point averages (GPAs) and test scores. For more information about testing and doing well in high school, visit the Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development's website at www.postsecondary.cps.k12.il.us.

Some scholarship forms clearly state that non-citizens may apply, while others clearly state that only U.S. citizens are eligible. Some, however, do not state this information clearly. In these cases, you must contact the scholarship provider to learn whether the scholarship is available to non-citizens. Even if the application asks for a social security number, there is still a chance that non-citizens can apply and leave that section blank. The only way to know for sure is to contact the scholarship provider. A number of scholarships require the applicant to file the Free Application for Federal student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their award amount. Undocumented students should ask whether there is another method to determine financial need as they are not eligible to file the FAFSA. It is crucial that undocumented students apply to as many scholarships as possible and begin searching for scholarships as early as possible.

For an updated list of scholarships which are open to undocumented students, please visit the Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development's website at www.postsecondary.cps.k12.il.us under the financing college tab.

You can search for scholarships using Choices Planner. Choices Planner is a web-based career and education planning software that CPS is using to help students develop an individual career and postsecondary plan. It has a scholarship search engine in the "learn" module of the program. To access Choices Planner for the first time, please see your CPS guidance counselor.

Students may also search for additional scholarships using the following websites:

www.fastweb.com

www.scholarships.com

www.petersons.com/finaid

Students should also look for scholarships provided by community organizations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DO I NEED TO SUPPLY A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON MY COLLEGE APPLICATIONS?

A social security number is not required for admission into most colleges and universities. If you do not have a social security number, the college should be able to give you another identification number. A social security number is required if you are applying for federal financial aid.

IF I AM AN UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT, AM I ELIGIBLE FOR A STUDENT VISA?

Undocumented students are not eligible for student visas. Student visas are available only to students who reside outside the U.S and intend to return to their home country after they are done with their course of study.

IF MY PARENTS ARE UNDOCUMENTED BUT I AM DOCUMENTED, AM I ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID?

If you **are** a US Citizen but one or more of your parents are undocumented, you are eligible for federal financial aid. If your parents do not have a social security number, they should enter 000-00-0000 as their social security number on the FAFSA.

IF I AM UNDOCUMENTED, CAN I APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?

Yes, there are scholarships for which undocumented students may apply. Please see the scholarship section of this brochure for more information. The Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development has a list of scholarships available to undocumented students on its website.

Please visit: www.postsecondary.cps.k12.il.us.

IF I AM A PERMANENT RESIDENT, AM I AN UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT? AM I ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID?

Generally, you are an eligible noncitizen if you are a U.S. permanent resident and have an Alien Registration Card (I-551). Eligible noncitizens may apply for federal financial aid.

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN IN-STATE TUITION, THE UNIVERSITY THAT I WILL ATTEND REQUIRES THAT I SUBMIT A SIGNED STATEMENT. WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION?

Information included in the document will only be used by the university.

HOW CAN I BECOME A LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT?

A "green card" gives you official immigration status (Lawful Permanent Residency) in the United States. There are a number of ways to be eligible for permanent residency. Because it may take a long time, students should begin legalizing their status as soon as possible. For general information and to view the various paths to citizenship please visit <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/residency/index.htm>.

Congress periodically focuses on immigration reform, and therefore it is important to be informed about immigration policy. To learn the most updated information about the latest immigration legislation, visit the national immigration law center at www.nilc.org. To express your opinion about current policy or reforms that you desire, contact your senators and representatives. To find out who your senators and representatives are and their contact information visit

**<http://www.senate.gov/index.htm> and
<http://www.house.gov/>.**

Immigrant Rights

The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

36 South Wabash Avenue, Suite 1425, Chicago, IL 60603
312-332-7360 fax: 312-332-7044
www.icirr.org

National Immigration Law Center

3435 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2850, Los Angeles, CA 90010
213-639-3900 fax: 213-639-3911
info@nilc.org www.nilc.org

Citizenship

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Chicago Citizenship Office: USCIS Citizenship Office
536 S. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60605
www.uscis.gov



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